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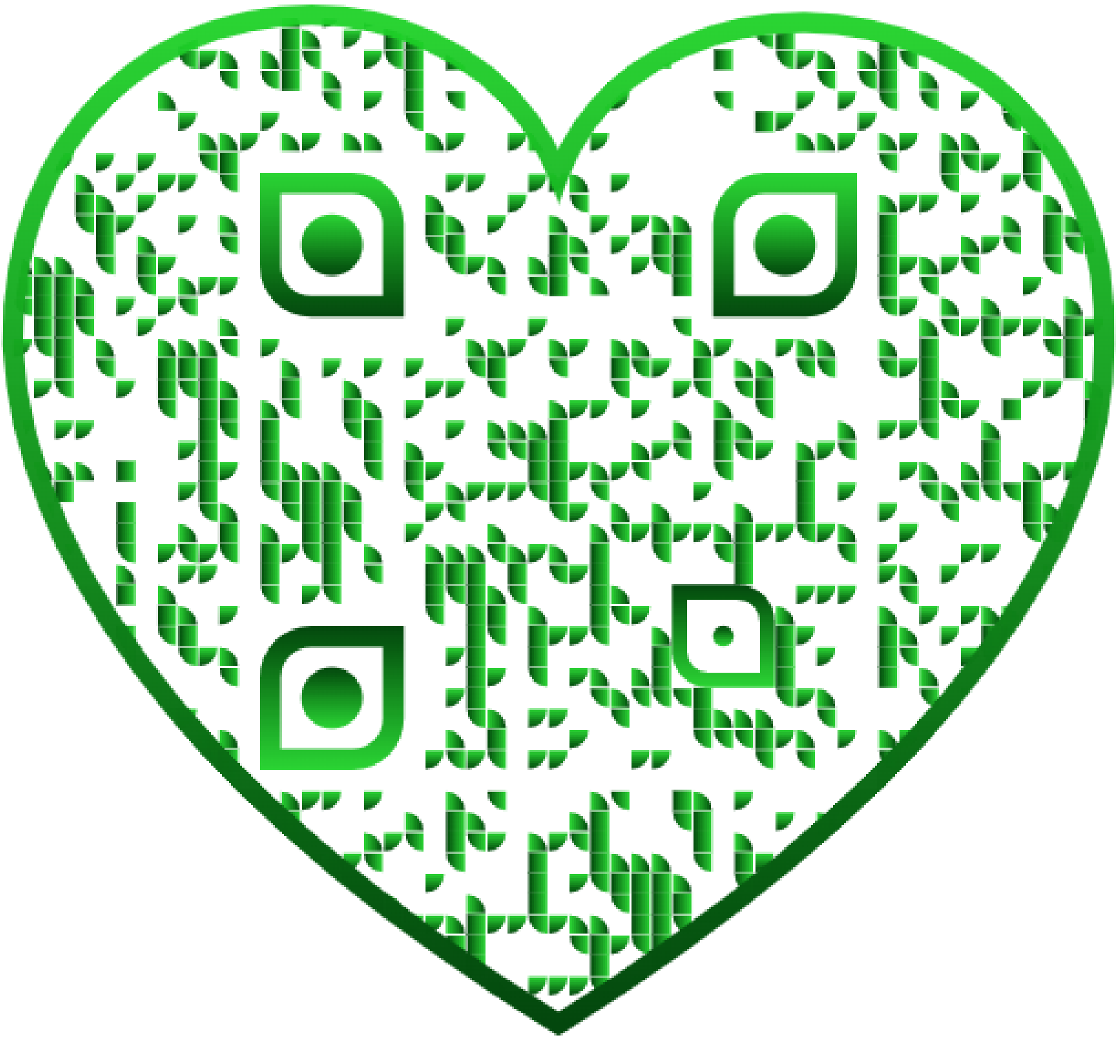

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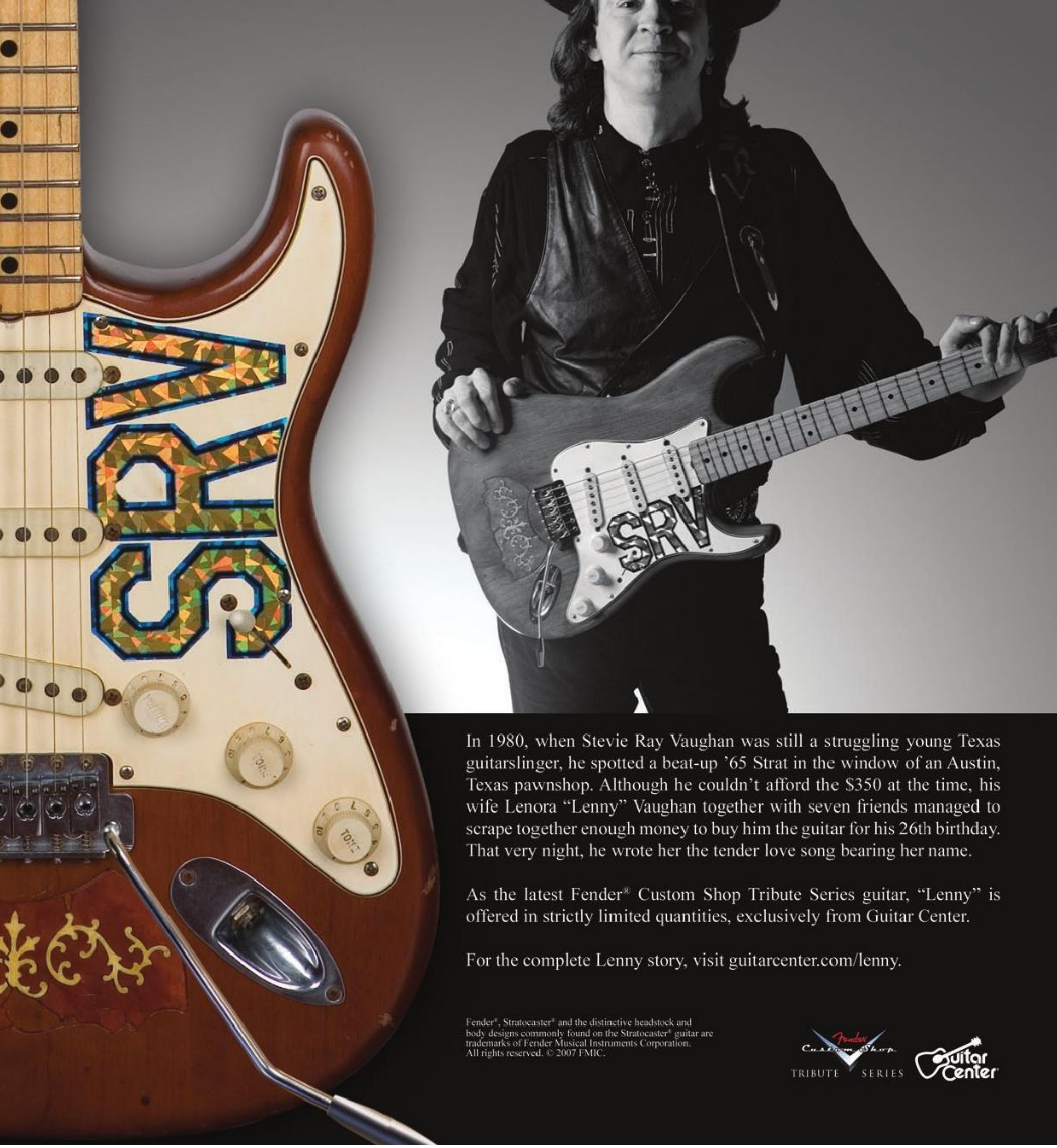

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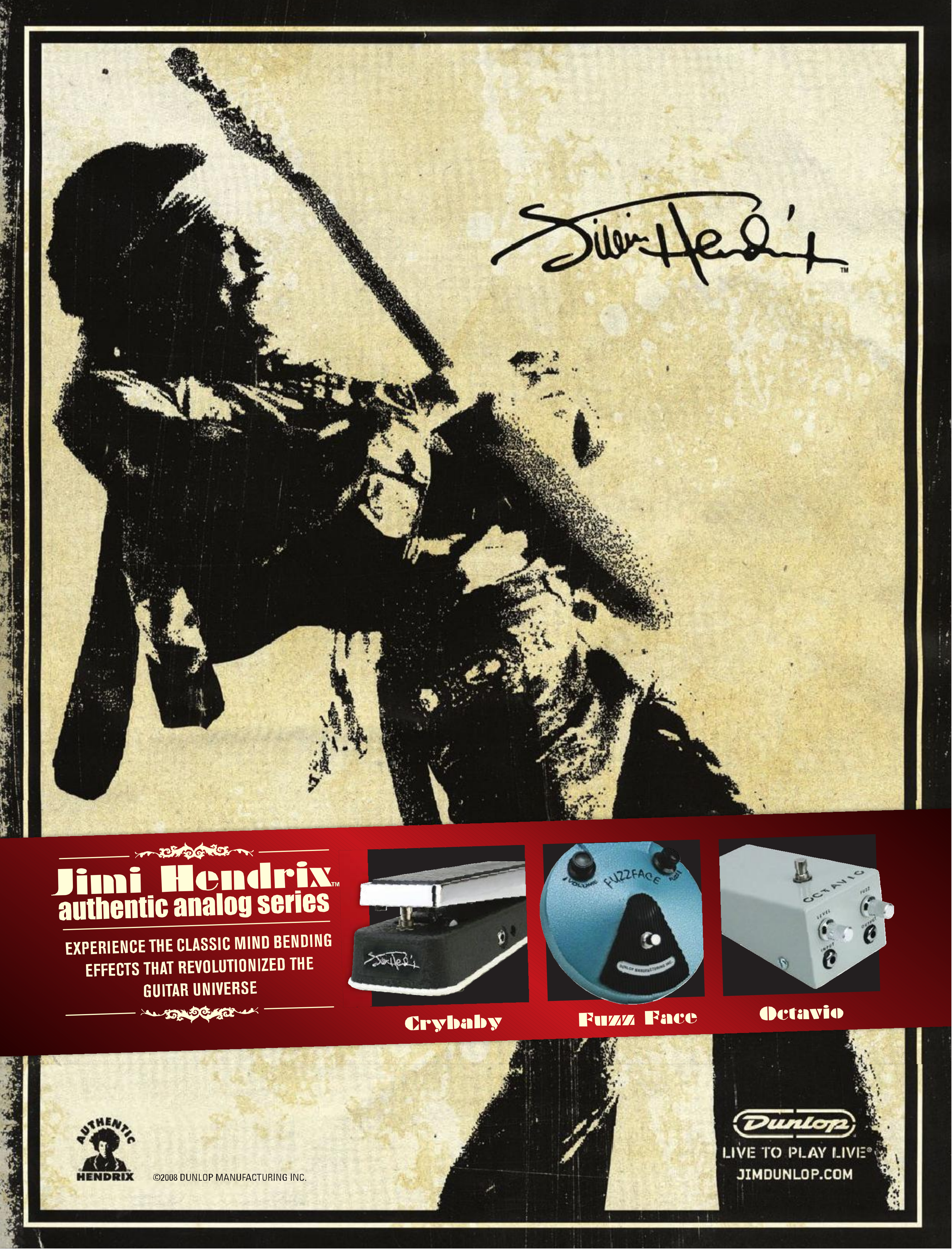
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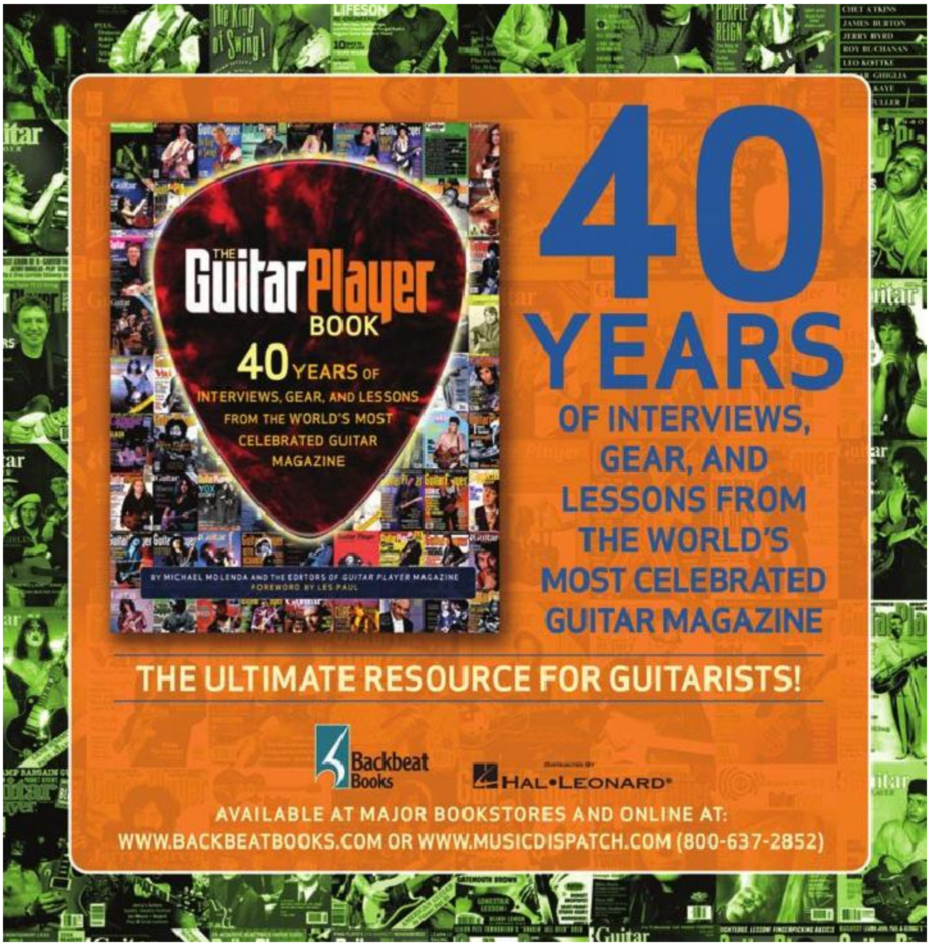

HOW TO PLAY LIKE
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

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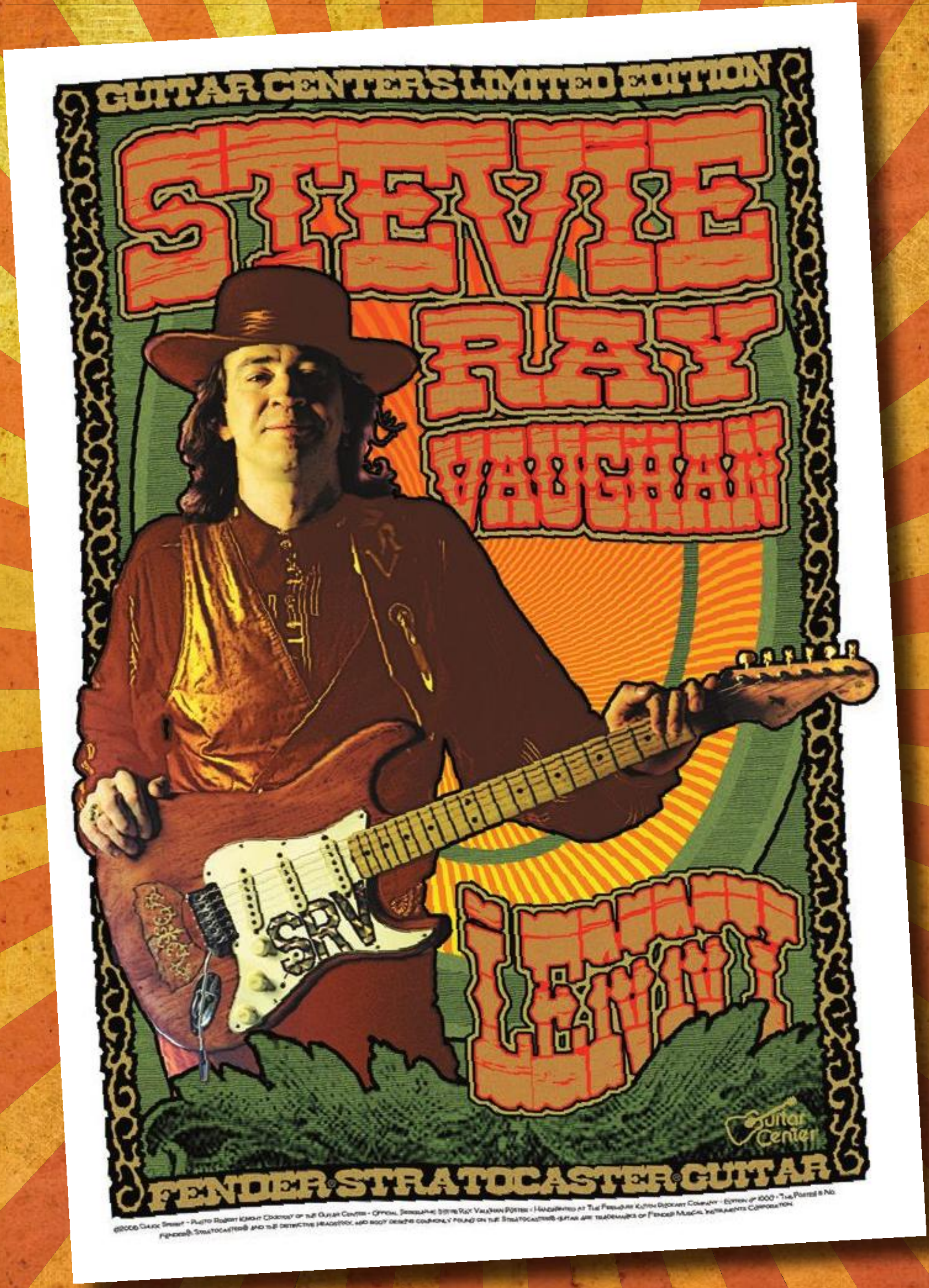

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Continuing Legacy of SRV

By Madaline Goldstein

Although we have missed him greatly for 18 years now, Stevie Ray Vaughan's style and flair continue to inspire new generations of musicians. From John Mayer's bluesy rhythms to Los Lonely Boys' regional Texan flavors, Stevie Ray's muse ignites passions in today's guitarists, lighting an emotional flame that engulfs the ears of all who listen to even a tiny shred of his repertoire. His music is *that* seductive, and you don't have to be a blues lover to understand that SRV was one of those transcendent musicians who fused tone, technique, heart, and soul into a sound that could shake the angels. This was a man who literally *bled* for his music—tearing his flesh on incredibly heavy guitar strings with vicious, impassioned bends. His guitar's signature growl not only reinvigorated Texas blues, it almost single-handedly brought the genre back to commercial prominence. Before SRV, it can be argued that it wasn't the least bit cool to play the blues in the '80s. After SRV—well, the constant, on-going, and seemingly never-ending appearance of Stevie clones alone spotlights how much of an impact he had on guitar players and on the blues itself.

Stevie Ray Vaughan is the *definition* of a guitar hero. And even if you play rock, jazz, bluegrass, or metal, you can learn something deep and valuable from studying the man's approach, concepts, and background.

SRV and Albert King filming *In Session*, 1983.

In this very special issue, the editors of *Guitar Player*—through the magazine's exclusive archives—reveal every aspect of Stevie Ray's meaty tone, his gear choices, and all the subtle nuances and explosive fire of his playing. We proffer nine articles, ranging from the time of his genre-blasting appearance on David Bowie's smash *Let's Dance* album to his industrial-strength tour with Jeff Beck to his final interview with his brother Jimmie Vaughan to his last show as recounted by Buddy Guy bassist Greg Rzab.

Also included are two thrilling SRV lessons, two full-song transcriptions ("Riviera Paradise" from 1989's *In Step* and "Scuttle Buttin'" from 1984's *Couldn't Stand the Weather*), and a bonus lesson section saturated with Texas blues techniques, licks, and riffs, as well as a info-packed "How To Play Like" seminar on blues-rock legend—and fellow Texan—Johnny Winter.

And while we produced this issue to honor Stevie Ray and celebrate his impact on guitarcraft, it's really *you*—the world's musicians—who memorialize SRV by incorporating his licks, his tone, and his emotions into your own playing. So here's to Stevie, and to all who share his admiration of music's power to captivate.

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THE PURSUIT OF HUGE

SRV's Ultimate Tone Secrets

By Andy Ellis with Dave Rubin

Check out the photo (right) to see just how far Stevie Ray Vaughan was willing to go in his pursuit of ultimate tone. Cesar Diaz, SRV's astute amp tech, snapped the shot during the *In Step* sessions to document Vaughan's extraordinary amp lineup.

On the far right is a pair of Marshall Major 200-watt heads (a Super P.A. and a Super Lead, respectively) atop Marshall 4x15 and 8x10 cabinets. It's safe to assume Vaughan experienced no shortage of low end with these KT88-equipped monsters. His numerically sequenced '64 blackface Fender Vibroverbs—each bearing a 15" speaker—are stacked next to the Marshalls. To the left is a 150-watt Howard Dumble Steel String Slinger head and Dumble 4x12 bottom. A 100-watt Marshall JCM 800 half-stack (far left) completes the front line. A sweet, blonde '62 Fender Twin stares alluringly from the back row. Let's see, all together, that's roughly 750 tube watts powering ten 15" and ten 12" speakers. A real wall of voodoo, podner.

According to Diaz—who set up 32 amps throughout the studio—SRV also relied on a dead-mint '59 Fender Bassman that he scored for him for many tracks.

"It got to be like the Crusades," Diaz recalls, "a pilgrimage of amplifiers. Stevie would hit a note and the walls would rattle."

"When we got ready for a particular song, I'd get the best sound from each amp, and then combine them all," explained Vaughan. "I tried to make up for what was wrong with one amp by using another with it."

There's no doubt that the essence of SRV's big sound lay in his hands. Still, when you analyze the tone equation, certain elements emerge time and again. For instance, Vaughan liked 15" speakers. Onstage, he almost always ran several amps in parallel. Early on, he favored a 100-watt Marshall Town And Country 2x12 combo in tandem with a Fender Vibroverb. In '84, he switched to his sequenced Vibroverbs stacked on two blackface Fender Super Reverbs.

Vaughan used heavy strings on Number One, his battered '59 sunburst Strat. In 1990, *GP*'s Dan Erlewine measured SRV's GHS Nickel Rockers and reported the gauges—.013, .015, .019 (plain), .028, .038, and .058. Vaughan tuned his Strat to *E♭*, imparting yet more beef to his sumo sound.

"It seems like tuning to *E♭* destroys amps," he once remarked. "It may have to do with frequencies within the tubes."

SRV played with the round end of his pick. He preferred jumbo Dunlop frets because "instead of the note fading out when you bend a string, it will get bigger." His Strats all had rosewood necks, except for Lenny—a maple-neck that was a gift from his wife.

"There's a fatter sound on the rosewood, as far as I can tell," said Vaughan. "It's not as bright."

For effects, Vaughan generally stuck with a puke-green Ibanez Tube Screamer and a Vox wah, which he'd augment from time to time with a Fender Vibratone [*a vintage effect that simulates a Leslie by rotating a slit styrofoam drum around a stationary speaker*]. On tour with Beck in '90, Vaughan dragged out an old Fuzz Face and an Octavia.

"The Octavia sounds good when I use it with the Tube Screamer," he revealed.

And yet, even with all these tools, Vaughan believed that getting a great sound went beyond gear, and that the quest could be elusive.

"I'm just trying to find the most tone I can," he said. "Sometimes I find it, sometimes I want to choke my amp. Then, there are the nights when it doesn't seem like I've got anything to do with it. That's the one you always play for. Sometimes, it's effortless, and sometimes it's a struggle, but the chill bumps are worth it when you get 'em." *—Originally published in the December 1993 issue of* Guitar Player

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EUPHORIC THUNDER

Stevie Ray Vaughan's Last Show

By Greg Rzab

A veteran of the James Cotton and Otis Rush bands, Greg Rzab has played bass for Buddy Guy since 1985. He crossed trails with Stevie Ray Vaughan many times on the road and onstage at Legends, Guy's popular Chicago nightclub. Rzab was traveling with Eric Clapton's entourage the night Vaughan died.

For some reason, Stevie Ray let me into his world. I wasn't like a good buddy, but he always had a backstage pass for me, and he let me right in. He always spent time talking to me, and I feel honored by that. I had seen him play the Stage Theater in Ann Arbor, Michigan, around Easter, and he was clean and sharp as a tack. I could see his playing evolving to the next level, right before my eyes. It was just explosive. I've never seen him play better. When I talked to him after the show, he was real happy that everything was coming together for him. The next day, Stevie, Chris, Tommy, and I went in their van to see Eric Clapton play. Eric brought Stevie onstage, and they played "Before You Accuse Me" and "After Midnight." Stevie used Eric's amp and guitar, but his personality came straight through. Eric played real nice, but Stevie was on fire—just ripping, man. He tore the whole place down.

Stevie played really hot on his last night, too. It was Eric Clapton's tour, and he had invited Stevie to his shows at Alpine Valley in East Troy, Wisconsin. I think they were the last two nights of his tour. Eric sent a limo to pick up Buddy and me in Chicago, and we flew up there with Eric and his entourage in his copters. I met Stevie in his dressing room just before his show. Robert Cray was playing, and Stevie was so mellow. He was walking around shirtless, but he had his hat on. He was just real casual and happy, and the guys were enjoying themselves. That always impressed me. Stevie's band was such a family situation. He had a genuine affection for Chris and Tommy. He never slighted those guys. Wherever he was playing, they were right there—they were part of him. You don't see that all the time. They were always good, simple, down-to-earth folks.

During Stevie's set, I stood in the wings at stage left with Buddy. Buddy was digging it because Stevie played a couple of his tunes. "Leave My Girl Alone" was one of them. He also played "Mary Had a Little Lamb." What stood out most of all, though, was that they were playing so tight. The band's sound had matured, and everything was just perfect. When they walked offstage, the applause was *deafening*. It was like thunder. I had chills. I thought, "Man, you did it, Stevie. You got 'em."

Eric did his set, and then they all came on for the encore: Jimmie Vaughan, Stevie, Buddy, Eric, and maybe Robert Cray, too. Phil Palmer, who was Eric's guitarist, was still up there with the rest of Eric's band. It was real casual—just an off-the-cuff thing. One would take a solo and finish, and then the next guy would take a solo. I think they each took two solos. They were up there enjoying themselves and playing their thing. The last song was "Sweet Home Chicago."

After that, they walked offstage into the artists' dressing rooms. Buddy, Eric, Jimmie, Stevie, and I went into the same room, and they were all hugging each other. They were euphoric, and it was a real exciting moment. Eric said, "Man, that was so much fun. We ought to take this on the road!" Then, they began rubbing each other's fingertips, comparing callouses. "Ha! Check this one out!" "But no, this one's bigger than yours." It was like road warriors comparing war wounds. And they all seemed equally in awe of each other. It was a real celebration of the moment, and who they were and that they were all there together. Soon after that, Eric's tour manager came in and said, "The weather's getting bad, guys. We gotta break things up and get out of here."

We all got in the vans and went out to the copters. It was really foggy. A guy took his t-shirt off and wiped off the helicopter, and no sooner had he wiped it off and it was all fogged up again. I rode with Eric, Buddy, and Eric's entourage. We could see the lights of the other copters as they took off. Stevie Ray's copter went in a different direction than the others. Ours was the last copter to leave, and that's the last I saw of him. When we landed in Chicago, two limos were waiting. Our driver told us the other copter hadn't arrived yet. The next morning, the phone rang, and a friend told me the copter Stevie Ray was aboard had slammed into a man-made ski hill.

Stevie's death has been positive in that it has affected a lot of people and brought them together. People were genuinely moved by the guy. I've met a lot of big so-called stars, but Stevie was real rare. His honesty and sincerity, and the goodness of his heart always shone through. He never slighted anyone. He spoke to everyone, signed every autograph, took every photo, and had a genuine concern. That's rare. The sad thing about it is we need more people like that to set an example.

Lately, Buddy has been going into solos where he sometimes hits Stevie things. It's very brief and subtle, but he'll look back at me, and give me a little twinkle in his eye, like, "Yeah, here's Stevie." When it's played with sincerity, the primary purpose of music is to inspire the heart, and that's what Stevie Ray was all about.

—Originally published in the March 1991 issue of Guitar Player

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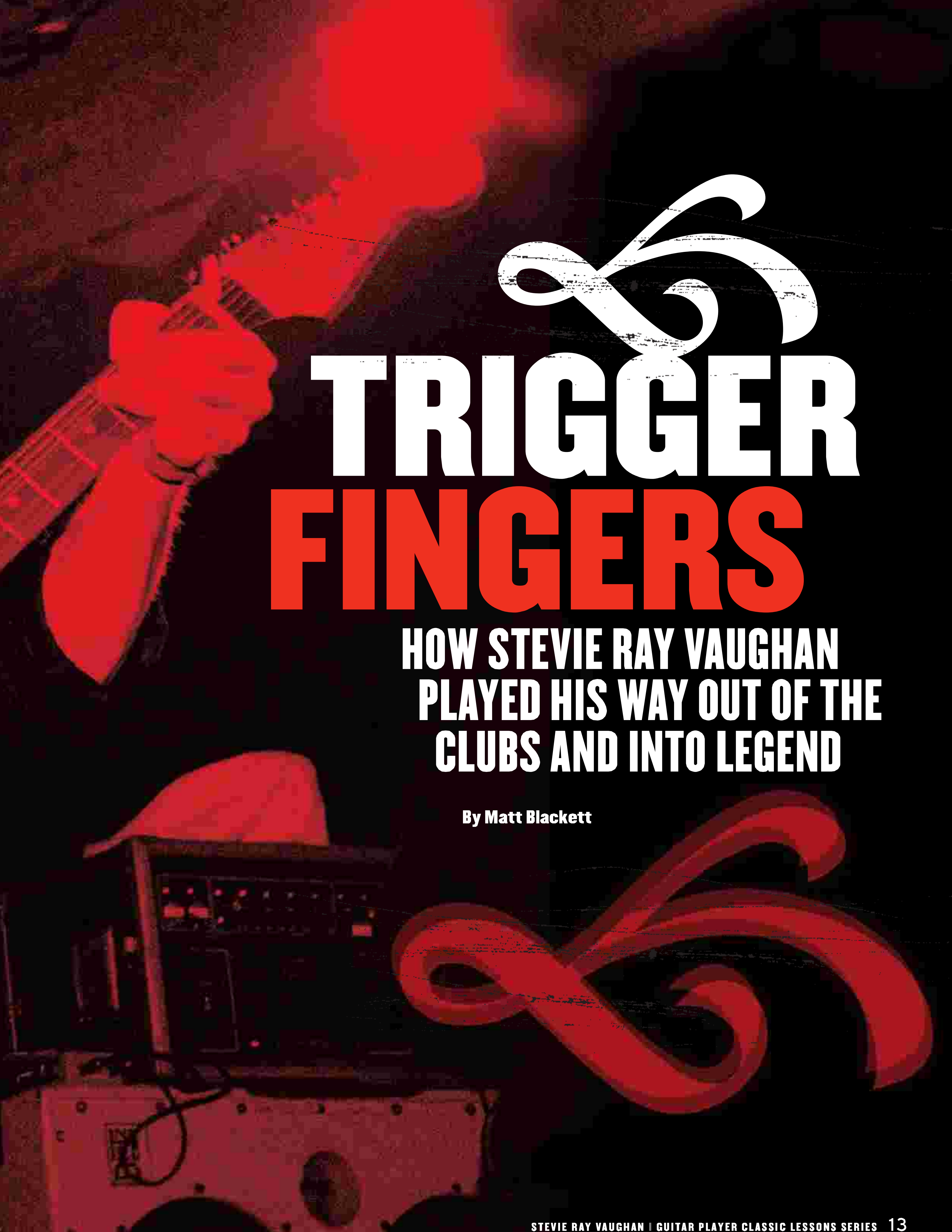

TRIGGER FINGERS

HOW STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PLAYED HIS WAY OUT OF THE CLUBS AND INTO LEGEND

By Matt Blackett

"I was into that guy before anyone." That's a common refrain among guitarists. Recognizing a great player before it's fashionable to do so is a point of pride in the guitar playing community. After all, no one wants to look like some fair-weather, bandwagon-jumping fan. The thing is, there was no such thing as a blues bandwagon for anyone to jump on in the early '80s.

New Wave bands like the Go-Gos and Men at Work shared the airwaves with pop rockers such as Journey and Foreigner. The closest thing to a blues-based guitar hero was Eddie Van Halen, and a I-IV-V shuffle was about as uncool as you could get. That all changed overnight when a guitar slinger from Austin, Texas, named Stevie Ray Vaughan exploded on the scene in 1983.

It's difficult now for most guitarists to remember a time before SRV. His tone, style, and stage show have all become popular-music benchmarks. But that was not the case when Vaughan first set the world of guitar on fire. Most guitarists went from never having heard of the guy to not being able to get away from him. Turn on rock radio, and you'd hear a track off Vaughan's slamming debut album. Switch to a pop station and there he was again on David Bowie's *Let's Dance*. It seemed to happen so suddenly that it was easy for some to think that Vaughan hadn't paid his dues.

The fact is, Vaughan and his band, Double Trouble, did their time playing dive bars and lousy gigs as much as anyone. When things did start to click for SRV, each new break was plagued with difficulty. And when the red carpet was finally rolled out, Vaughan paid dues with every step he took on it.

"Larry Graham came up to us backstage and told Stevie, 'I've heard about you. I know you're a badass guitar player.'" — Double Trouble drummer Chris Layton

Nowhere was this "best of times, worst of times" dichotomy more obvious than at the 1982 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. Without a doubt the biggest gig of Vaughan's career, the festival would hopefully be his ticket out of the dives and into the big time. It proved to be exactly that, but not before SRV would go through yet another trial by fire, which is immortalized on the new, two-CD *Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble—Live in Montreux 1982 and 1985*. Montreux would also lead to Vaughan guesting on the huge pop record that would further his legend and reputation, but even that break would turn into a brutal rite of passage.

By the time SRV returned to Montreux in 1985, he was at the top of the blues guitar heap, and it was just another gig where everyone loved him. The following recollections, however, are from the people who worked with Vaughan before he became famous. As his bandmates, guitar tech, producer, and admirers, they recognized his genius before anyone else, and they are best able to paint the picture of SRV on the verge of becoming a superstar.

THE ROAD TO MONTREUX

"I first saw Stevie play in early 1977," recalls Double Trouble drummer Chris Layton. "I was awestruck."

"When I saw Stevie, it was like a revelation," adds bassist Tommy Shannon. "That's where I wanted to be. When they called me, that was one of the happiest days of my life."

The band started working the Austin/Lubbock/Houston/Dallas circuit, but was unable to take things to the next level.

"Before the Montreux show, we were mostly doing club gigs in Texas," says Layton. "We'd gone to the East Coast twice and the West Coast once—all low-dollar gigs."

"We were traveling around in a milk truck," elaborates Shannon, "with a bed rigged up on top, a couch for a back seat, and all of our gear crammed in there. We were living lean."

Despite all the struggles, Vaughan's reputation was growing, and the band's slamming live shows were impressing audiences, regardless of size.

"We always played with enthusiasm and excitement," says Layton, "even if we were only playing to five people. And we never got a bad reception."

For the most part, that seems true, but Shannon does remember a particularly rugged gig.

"We opened for the Clash in Austin," he says, "and people were yelling and throwing stuff and telling us we sucked. We were supposed to do two shows, but we told them we weren't doing the second night. For some reason, I don't remember that hurting our feelings too much, though."

SWISS BANK

While Vaughan and company were slugging it out in the clubs, they crossed paths with veteran R&B producer Jerry Wexler, who was so taken with the band that he arranged to get them on a really prestigious gig—blues night at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

"I had played the Montreux Festival with Johnny Winter in 1969, and we went over great," says Shannon. "I told the guys how beautiful it was. I had nothing but good memories."

Layton recalls feeling a nervous excitement about the gig.

"Stevie and I had never been to Europe, and we were excited by the prospect," he says. "But it was going to cost us over $15,000 to go, and we had to get a loan from our management group. Even though it seemed risky, Stevie thought we should give it a shot, because we were doing the same clubs over and over. People loved us, but we wondered where we were going with it."

So off they went to Switzerland with the intention of taking the country by storm. Sitting backstage before going on only served to heighten the excitement for the band.

"Larry Graham came up to us backstage and told Stevie, 'I've heard about you. I know you're a badass guitar player,'" remembers Layton. "That was way cool, because we were huge fans of Sly & the Family Stone."

Shannon was particularly jazzed to meet one of his bass heroes.

"Graham is one of my favorite bass players," he says. "He's so innovative. He asked if he could jam with us during our encore on 'Johnny B. Goode.' Stevie was really pumped up then—not just about the gig, but also about the chance to jam with Larry Graham."

Certain factors, however, would prevent the set from being all that

SRV had hoped it would be.

"I noticed that there hadn't been any other electric bands up until we went on," says Layton. "It occurred to me that we were going to be quite a contrast. Stevie had a couple of amps up there, and we always played loud. But it never entered our minds that we might not go over."

"It was all acoustic acts," adds Shannon. "We shouldn't have been playing that night. We came out blasting, but we didn't think anything of it. People were always telling Stevie he was too loud, so nothing seemed out of the ordinary."

What was out of the ordinary was the crowd's response. Almost instantly, people started booing, and the boos would persist for SRV's entire performance. Roots legend John Hammond, Jr. opened the show that night and vividly recalls the events.

"When I did my set, the crowd response was amazing," he says. "It was one of those magical nights. I had heard Stevie before that night, because he was already legendary as a guitar wizard in blues circles. And he was always very respectful to the blues. The only radical thing was the volume, and that was his undoing at Montreux. He was so loud it was overwhelming. He was playing his ass off, but he lost the crowd by his second song. People weren't hearing the music because of the volume."

Darryl Pitt was the staff photographer at Montreux for nine years, and he worked the '82 show. Despite having heard countless amazing musicians over the years, Pitt knew instantly that he was witnessing a unique talent.

"This guy I had never heard of came out and started playing and stalking the stage and I was shaking," he recalls. "I was a blues fan, but I was not a fan of the schmaltzy blues revues that were successfully touring Europe at the time. There was nothing schmaltzy about Stevie. He was the real deal. I couldn't believe the crowd didn't get that. Then, the boos started, and from where I was in the front row, the boos were a lot louder than what you hear on the recording. You could see it on Stevie's face later in the set. It got to him."

Pitt has a different take on why Vaughan wasn't better received that night.

"In my opinion," he says, "it wasn't about acoustic versus electric. I think it was racist. I think the crowd turned on this white guy in the cowboy hat who they viewed as kind of a caricature. I believe Albert King would have gone over playing the exact same stuff."

While Pitt and Hammond were watching the drama unfold, Vaughan and his band mates were living it, cranking out rocking versions of future classics such as "Pride and Joy," "Texas Flood," and "Love Struck Baby," despite the hostile crowd reaction.

"I realized after the first song that we weren't getting to them," says

Nile Rodgers on *Let's Dance*

By 1982, Nile Rodgers was already a world-renowned guitarist and producer with platinum albums to his credit. He was doing pre-production for what would become David Bowie's landmark *Let's Dance* when Bowie excitedly informed him he wanted to use an unknown guitarist from Texas named Stevie Ray Vaughan on the upcoming sessions. —*Matt Blackett*

Were you in Switzerland during the Montreux Festival?

Yes, but I didn't go to the show. David did, and he said, "Man, I heard a fantastic guitar player last night!" He had never heard of him before, and Stevie's playing just blew him away.

Were you okay with the idea of using him on the record?

If David Bowie makes a suggestion, you've got to listen to it. I was curious, but, because I hadn't seen the gig, I had no idea what Stevie would add. I didn't even know he was a blues player. David just told me, "I know this is going to be cool." David has an incredible history of finding unique guitar players, so I was expecting something amazing, but I didn't know what.

What did you think when Vaughan showed up?

My first impression was that Stevie was a really, really nice guy. When I finally heard him play, I'll be honest—I didn't get it. I thought he sounded so much like Albert King that I was offended. I thought, "David, if you want this trip, why don't we just call Albert King? At least people have heard of him!"

So, you didn't think it would work?

The concept was very weird at first. I mean, try to get into my frame of mind as a producer who is trying to make David Bowie hip and new and interesting. Today, it's totally accepted to have a blues element on any kind of record, but in 1982, no one was claiming to be a blues fan. But it only took a matter of hours before I not only got it, but I was digging it, and having more fun than you can imagine.

Did Vaughan track loud?

Oh, yes! He stood in the control room with us, and his amps were just *blasting*. It was the loudest thing I'd ever heard in my life. I was fine with it, though, because Stevie's sound was very soothing. It didn't make you cringe like some loud tones can.

How much direction did you give him?

Not much. We just turned the tape on and let him rip. He would find the key and just go off.

Were you looking for complete performances, or would you punch in sections?

Almost all of my work with Stevie over the years was about complete performances—there was very little punching. I didn't comp any tracks for the *Let's Dance* sessions, but for the Vaughan Brothers' *Family Style*, I used a Synclavier to move performances around, and Stevie loved that. He'd go out there and use the Synclavier himself, and I thought, "Oh god, what have I done?"

How do you view his place in history?

He's right up there with the best of them. No question. To come along at a time when nobody was digging the blues, and to not only make it a credible art form, but also to pave the way for so many after him—that's incredible. But even if you forget about all that and just listen to his playing, it's magical. I really miss him, man. I think about him a lot. He was a virtuoso—right up there with greats like John McLaughlin, Wes Montgomery, and Julian Bream. Stevie had the gift.

Shannon. "You could look out there and see people frowning, and we could hear them booing. It hurt Stevie bad, but he didn't let up. He just kept doing what he does. He didn't panic or withdraw."

"Because I know Stevie so well," says Layton, "I could tell it was affecting him onstage. But he didn't change his approach. He wasn't arrogant about it, but his attitude was, 'If you don't like us, we're sorry, but we're going to keep on, because that's all we know how to do.' It was heartbreaking, though—especially for Stevie. When we finally got off stage he was like, 'Oh man, what just happened?'"

MONTREUX POST MORTEM

As SRV was reeling from the shock of his performance, Pitt took it upon himself to find the unknown guitarist and apologize for the crowd.

"I went backstage," he recalls, "and I saw Stevie slumped on a roadcase with a bare light bulb hanging over him. It's one of the bleakest things I've ever seen. As the staff photographer, I should have snapped that picture, because it perfectly encapsulated what had just happened. But all I could think to do was tell him how great I thought he was, and that the crowd was totally wrong. He smiled and thanked me. Even though he'd been through this ordeal he was really warm and friendly."

Hammond also spoke with SRV after his set, and tried to reassure his fellow bluesman that this was a fluke.

"He came off the stage in tears," says Hammond. "He was really vulnerable—there was no attitude. He just said, 'Aw man, we wanted to go over so big.' I told him that it was just one of those crowds, and that he played great. Anyone who really listened knew he was great."

"Stevie knocked down solo upon solo, and pulled notes out of the air that no one could have dreamed would work with my songs."
—David Bowie

Unfortunately, the hostile crowd reaction wasn't the last indignity that Vaughan and Double Trouble would suffer that night. Being booed off the stage obviously meant no encore, which also meant no jam with Graham.

"We walked off stage," says Layton, "and we walked by some other band's dressing room, and there's Larry Graham going over 'Johnny B. Goode' with them! It added insult to injury."

SWISS CHEESE

However, two members of the audience were very impressed with Vaughan's playing that night. Meeting them would prove to be not only the turning point of the Switzerland trip, but arguably the most important contacts of Vaughan's entire career. The first was David Bowie.

"Claude Nobs had run the Montreux Festival for many years," Bowie recalls. "He knew I was a big R&B fan, and he thought I might enjoy this new kid. Come the show, blasting through a short, but riveting set, SRV completely floored me. I probably hadn't been so gung-ho about a guitar player since seeing Jeff Beck with his band the Tridents."

Bowie and Vaughan talked after the show, and those discussions led to Vaughan playing on Bowie's huge *Let's Dance* album. SRV described the meeting in the August '83 issue of *Guitar Player*.

"From what I understand, Bowie was looking for somebody who played this style anyway, and I was the one he picked," said Vaughan. "I didn't really know how it would fit in, since I hadn't heard the material, and I didn't have any idea what the songs would sound like. I did know what kind of rhythm and blues David liked, because we talked about that."

The other fortuitous meeting that night involved Jackson Browne, who was so moved by Vaughan's playing that he offered to let him record for free in his studio in California. Those sessions would produce the master that became SRV's debut album, *Texas Flood*.

For Layton and Shannon, the words of praise from Bowie and Browne were a welcome relief from the catcalls during their set.

"It didn't surprise me at all that Bowie and Jackson Browne loved Stevie's playing," says Layton. "Stevie appreciated it, but he didn't trip on it. Any time a big star told him they liked his work, he would smile and say 'thanks,' but in his head he was thinking, 'Wow, you like me just like that guy over there who's an auto mechanic.' Everybody who liked his playing was just as important as the next person. He was a real statesman that way."

Vaughan and Double Trouble discovered after their set that no one was scheduled to play in the basement bar at Montreux, and they jumped at the chance to get back on the horse that threw them.

"We thought, 'We came to play, so let's play,'" says Layton. "Jackson Browne and his band stopped by and asked if they could jam."

"We felt a lot better by that point," adds Shannon, "and we played all night. When we left, I remember the sun coming up. It was a great jam."

HOME AGAIN

What had started out so great and then turned horrible, was now looking up again. SRV and company came home, filled once again with a mixture of nervous excitement.

"There was a bunch of stuff out there on the horizon, and it was really interesting," recalls Layton. "At the same time, it was a little scary, because Bowie had asked Stevie to play on this much-anticipated album of his, and there was talk of Stevie doing his tour. Tommy and I were worried that maybe our band was breaking up."

Over the Thanksgiving weekend in 1982, Vaughan, Layton, and Shannon went to Browne's studio in California to lay down tracks. The next month, SRV went to New York to record *Let's Dance*.

"Stevie strolled into the Power Station, and proceeded to rip up everything one thought about dance records," says Bowie. "He knocked down solo upon solo, and pulled notes out of the air that no one could have dreamed would work with my songs. In a ridiculously short time, he had become midwife to the sound that had been ringing in my ears all year."

Shortly thereafter, Vaughan began rehearsing for the biggest Bowie tour of all time. He never ended up doing the tour, and the reasons behind that decision remain unclear to this day. Layton recalls the conflicting emotions that SRV was wrestling with at the time.

"The Bowie tour seemed like a great break for Stevie," he says. "But there were a number of restrictions placed on him, such as having his press interviews approved and orchestrated through Bowie's people.

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Stevie was kind of a wild stallion, and he didn't like people trying to fence him in. Then there was the money issue. Stevie was getting paid on a weekly basis, with the understanding that they would do a couple of shows, then have a couple of days off. Well, Bowie's people kept adding shows, which made Stevie's weekly pay less meaningful. The money got played up as the big reason why he quit, but I think it was less important than the fact that we were on the verge of having our record come out, and Stevie wanted to be able to give it his all. That was what he had always wanted, and he didn't want to wait for a year to push his own record."

"Stevie was really unhappy at that point," remembers Shannon. "He told me about the rehearsals where they wanted him to come down this ramp making all these rock-star moves. He could never do it. He just walked down the ramp. The guy was so dedicated to his vision that he couldn't be false, and he wouldn't bend that rule for anyone."

Vaughan was also dedicated to his band mates, and he offered to pay them his Bowie salary in order to keep the band together in his absence. When he quit the Bowie tour, the news was greeted with relief and admiration from Double Trouble.

"All he said to me was, 'Man, I just couldn't do it,'" says Shannon. "I was really touched by his decision. I mean, the fact that in the midst of riding in limos and jets he could be happy to go back with us in our milk truck—that meant a lot."

SRV never said much about his split with the Bowie camp. He summed it up to *GP* in '83 by saying, "I learned a lot working with David Bowie, but I'm glad to be back with my own band again. That was always my main concern, right from the start."

What seemed like a public relations disaster—quitting a world tour that would expose him to thousands of new fans—was once again transformed into a music-biz coup. News of Vaughan's ballsy choice to remain true to his bluesman vision spread through the guitar community and garnered him an incalculable amount of street cred.

"We had a great publicist named Charles Comer," explains Layton, "and he spun the news like, 'This skinny little white blues guitarist from Texas is not doing the biggest tour of a real star. Where does this nobody get off refusing this total somebody? He must have a lot of guts.' As this story's getting played up, our record and Bowie's record are out at the same time, and everyone's talking about how it's the same guitarist. You couldn't have planned it any better than how it worked out on its own."

"About a month later," continues Shannon, "we were touring California in our milk truck, and we pulled up to a club and there was a line stretching around the block. We'd played there before, and the place was less than half full. We saw this crowd and wondered if we had the right club! Then the record started selling like crazy, and we were on our way. It was an exciting time, but in a lot of ways I wasn't surprised. I always knew Stevie was that great—long before he was discovered." *—Originally published in the February 2002 issue of* Guitar Player

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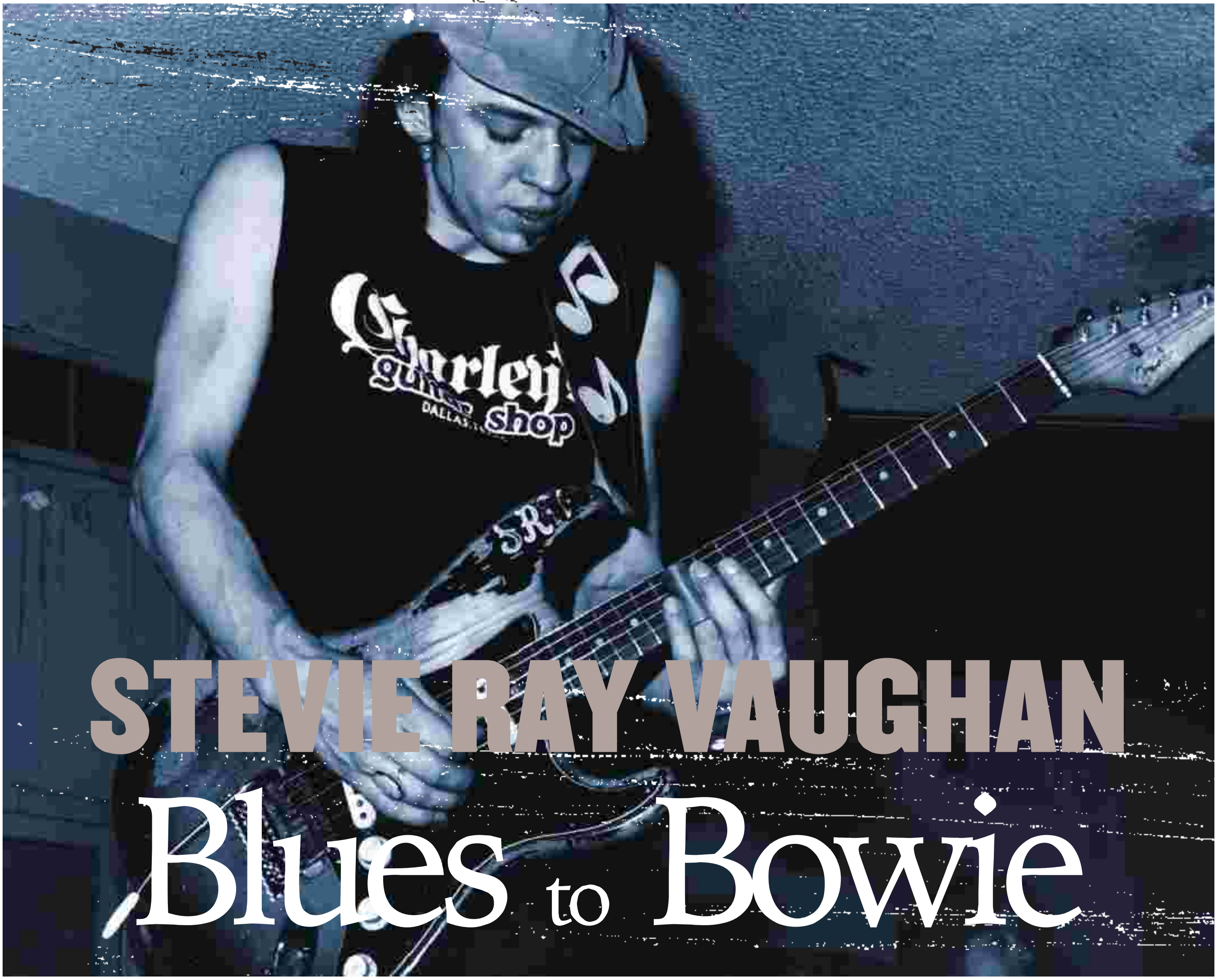


STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

Blues to Bowie

By Bruce Nixon

Stevie Ray Vaughan recording with David Bowie? To observers in Dallas, Austin, and New York it was hardly the most predictable of musical mergers. The young white Texas blues guitarist, and the artful, sophisticated, and often theatrical English rocker seemed as far apart as chicken-fried steak and caviar.

But Vaughan and Bowie were not complete strangers. They had met after Vaughan's performance at the Montreux Festival in the summer of '82, and talked at length about rhythm and blues. Still, the call this past spring to play lead guitar on Bowie's *Let's Dance* album came rather unexpectedly. Vaughan, after all, is an all-out blues and boogie man with a muscular, uncompromising shuffle style and a brass-knuckle guitar tone. Bowie, in fact, has repeatedly summed up the Vaughan approach rather succinctly: "I think he considers Jimmy Page something of a modernist. The lad seems to have stopped at Albert Collins."

The unpredictable combination turned out nicely. Vaughan's work appears on six tracks of *Let's Dance*, and his meaty, bluesy guitar complements the album's sound. It also drew enough attention to help pave the way to a recording contract—and a busy concert schedule—for the 28-year-old blues guitarist.

At the time he began working on *Let's Dance*, though, Vaughan was virtually unknown by David Bowie's pop/rock audience. The guitarist himself approached the sessions, which took place at the Power Station studios in Manhattan, with at least some trepidation.

"I didn't really know how to fit in," he recalls, "because I hadn't heard the material, and I didn't have any idea what the songs would sound like. I knew what kind of rhythm and blues David liked, though, because we'd talked about that. But I'd never really listened to his music too much before."

Vaughan's unfamiliarity with the bulk of Bowie's recorded work may come as no surprise, as he is almost the epitome of the great Southwestern club rocker. He did a long stand in the trenches, working Texas clubs for the better part of a decade, although he has also built a solid and individualistic style, and an indisputable regional reputation.

For the past several years, Vaughan has led a tight trio called Double Trouble. The core of his set is a hefty, blistering shuffle style steeped in the Texas blues tradition (his brother Jimmie plays lead guitar with the Fabulous Thunderbirds). But he's just as well known around the Texas clubs for the Hendrix-like explosions of feedback, guitar abuse, and controlled noise that make up his club finale. Anyone who has seen Vaughan play a few times has watched him walk his Stratocaster—neck downwards—across the stage, and seen him create a breathtaking tremolo

PHOTO: BYRON BARR

effect by violently yanking the guitar neck backwards and forwards by the headstock.

He might have remained a local hero, but, this year, things finally seemed to click into place for the hard-working guitarist. Around the same time he received the invitation to play on *Let's Dance*, Vaughan was also signed to the newly-formed Hammond Records. Renowned talent scout, producer, and recording executive John Hammond had been watching Vaughan's work for several years. Hammond—whose discoveries have included Billie Holiday, Charlie Christian, Bob Dylan, and Bruce Springsteen—says of Stevie Ray: "He has got everything. He's a marvelous showman, and much more important, he's a completely natural musician—a great ensemble artist. And he knows how to put together a record. You don't find that very often. They're so excited about him at Epic that it's ridiculous. Well, it isn't ridiculous—they're *right*. Stevie is a mammoth talent. He has those good Texas roots. The last great guitar player I recorded from Texas was Charlie Christian, who was originally from Texas, although I heard him first in Oklahoma. When Stevie decided he wanted me to produce him, I couldn't believe it. I was terribly pleased."

While the guitarist was in New York for the Bowie sessions, he and Hammond went to work at Media Sound mixing Vaughan's first solo album, which was cut in Los Angeles last fall.

Vaughan describes working with Hammond: "When you mix and mix and mix, sometimes you get off-balance about how the record really sounds. He would come in, and if things were going really smooth, he'd just listen and come back later. If we had the echo turned all the way up because we'd gotten used to the sound of it, he'd come in and say, 'Turn that damn echo off,' and then laugh, and let you know it was okay. The record is real consistent in sound and tone because of that. It's hard to say just how he influenced the album. When he walks into a room he has a whole effect just by himself—just his being there smiling. If something was not as good as it could have been, he'd give input, and his support was incredible."

When the tapes were completed, Vaughan jumped to Epic (which also distributes Hammond Records), and his solo debut with Hammond as executive producer—the aptly titled *Texas Flood*—was released in June. It's an effort directed at capturing Double Trouble's live sound.

"We did a couple of extra tracks with the drums, creating our own room sound on top of the echo. It *really* sounds live," says Vaughan. "It is also pretty much what we do onstage. I'd call it rhythm and blues, but, sometimes, we get out there with it. A lot of people think of it as blues-rock, although I'd like to think of it as just music. Actually, the more I listen to that record, the more I like it, and I take that as a good sign."

Hammond will also be producing Vaughan's next album from scratch, and so the two will be working together again as soon as next fall.

The roots of the current developments in Vaughan's career go back to 1981. He had made a few brief swings up the East Coast, and he appeared with fellow Texan Albert

Collins at the NAMM convention in Chicago. Thanks to these forays, his reputation among blues fans was finally stretching beyond the borders of the Lone Star State. Then, early last year, Austin-based singer Lou Ann Barton—who had been a vocalist with Vaughan's band back in the '70s—was signed by Elektra/Asylum, and she began recording her first album. Veteran rhythm and blues producer Jerry Wexler, who was working on that project, visited her in Austin, and during the course of the trip saw Vaughan's band performing. Wexler subsequently assisted in engineering Vaughan's appearance at the 1982 Montreux Jazz Festival last summer.

In mid 1982, though, before they left for Switzerland, Double Trouble also went to New York to audition for Mick Jagger and Ron Wood of the Rolling Stones at the Danceteria club—another connection that developed out of Vaughan's word-of-mouth reputation. There was talk that Double Trouble would open a series of Stones dates in Europe during the summer, and so, in July, an optimistic Vaughan left for Montreux, appearing in a blues show with J.B. Hutto and Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson.

Vaughan never did join the Stones tour that summer, but Bowie saw his show at Montreux, and came backstage afterwards to meet him. They talked for a while, and the guitarist recalls he was surprised to discover that Bowie played tenor saxophone, and is a fan of Texas saxophonists King Curtis and Earl Bostic. Bowie also seemed to know Texas roots music pretty thoroughly. A few months later, the invitation to play on *Let's Dance* arrived.

"The entire recording experience helped a whole bunch, and in a lot of ways," Vaughan explains. "I learned a lot about playing—particularly in terms of recording techniques—and about business. It was real fun doing the record, trying to see where my style would fit in. It's always a learning experience, too, to play different kinds of music. It is a melting pot of other people's styles, but it's all mine because I can't copy any of them perfectly, and I don't want to. A melting pot is what I want it to be. It was a pretty open thing, and more an experience of looking at music in different ways—of looking at big arrangements and fitting the parts in. I learned a lot about how songs are built. But the Bowie sessions were easy, because I was basically free to do what I wanted. I really enjoyed the Power Station, and Bob Clearmountain was an amazing engineer to work with.

"From what I understand, Bowie was looking for somebody who played this style anyway, and I was the one he picked. Most of the time, he just told me to plug in and play. He'd say 'Plug that blue guitar in!' I cranked it all the way up, and other effects were added to it later. Nile Rodgers—the co-producer of *Let's Dance* and Chic rhythm guitarist—was there some of the time. He and Dave gave some input on what needed to be done, but it was real relaxed. There was no worrying over the parts. I probably played only two-and-a-half hours over the three days it took to do the thing. Most of the parts were done in one or two takes."

While he was in New York, Vaughan was also invited by Houston-born bluesman Johnny Copeland to play a single afternoon session for Copeland's upcoming third Rounder album (as yet untitled).

"I did three songs," Vaughan says, "with the two of us just playing back and forth through the solos, with the horns and everything—the full band. It was great playing with him. I did it while I was doing the Bowie

thing, and the studios were quite different. The Power Station is the most high-tech thing I've ever seen, while Johnny was working in this very down-home place near Times Square. It sounds dumb, but I find playing with him very inspiring. It was lots of fun. All you can do is stand up and go for it. We just tried to kick each other into doing something. But we'd played together twice before onstage, so I knew a little of what to expect."

The Dallas-born Vaughan was pleased with all the work he'd done in New York. Altogether, it added depth to his live work when he returned to performing in early June. But Vaughan's shows are still loud, wide-open, and full of energy, and as much as he owes to Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck, the core of his work is still Texas electric blues—a most distinctive sound that Stevie shares with a number of other Texas R&B club performers, including Dallas' Bugs Henderson, the Cobras from Austin, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, the Fort Worth-based Juke Jumpers, Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets, Omar and the Howlers, and even Delbert McClinton's band, whose roots go back to the thriving '50s Fort Worth rhythm and blues scene.

"My brother Jimmie was actually one of the biggest influences on my playing," Vaughan acknowledges. "He really was the reason why I started to play. He's three-and-a-half years older, so I listened to what he was listening to while he was learning to play—early Yardbirds stuff, Clapton, Jeff Beck, Hendrix. But he was also listening to Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Albert Collins, Albert King, Guitar Slim, and Freddie King. I think the very first 45 single I ever owned was Lonnie Mack's 'The Wham.' I also liked 'Suzie-Q,' the cut on the flip side.

"What came easy for Jimmie was harder for me, but I was doing club gigs before I was supposed to be able to. I was 13 or 14, but I always tried to work as much as possible and learn. I wasn't really in my brother's shadow—it's actually that I was always trying not to seem that way. I mean, I didn't follow in his footsteps, but I was excited by what he was doing."

Both Vaughans played in a handful of the black clubs in South Dallas—an experience that seems to be fairly common among the white Dallas blues players who came up in the '60s. The two brothers also worked in various club bands, sometimes together.

"There was a period," Vaughan recalls, "when you could hardly get a blues gig in Dallas. You had to play in a Top 40 band, and I had no desire to do that. Lots of musicians had already migrated down to Austin—my brother included. There's something in Austin that makes you want to get on the stick and go, and people are more open to different kinds of music there. For the last five years in Dallas, Jimmie and I couldn't get good blues gigs. I was playing bass for him in a band called Texas Storm."

Stevie moved to Austin in 1972, working in a number of local bands during the course of the next several years. In the mid '70s, when his Triple Threat Revue broke up, Vaughan spent a year with the Cobras, one of the most respected and highly regarded of the Texas R&B club bands. Double Trouble was formed in 1978.

"I was trying to find the formula where I could just relax and play," Vaughan says, "and not have to worry about keeping a band together like I did with Triple Threat."

Drummer Chris Layton joined at the start, and, about two years later, the trio reached its current form with the addition of bassist Tommy Shannon, who had played and recorded with Texas guitarist Johnny Winter during the late '60s and early '70s.

Although he normally brings a whole rack of guitars to a gig, Vaughan's main instrument is a battered sunburst '59 Fender Stratocaster with a rosewood fingerboard.

"It's one I bought about ten years ago," he explains. "I didn't even try it out in the store. I looked at it and I knew. I just knew. It's the first Strat I was ever really attached to, and it has held up well."

The instrument—which is strung with heavy-gauge GHS strings starting with a .013 high *E*—has only two custom features: a left-handed tremolo, and Gibson frets. But it is this guitar, Stevie affirms, that delivers the huge, powerful sound that has become his trademark.

"I love Fenders," he states.

The Strat is amplified either by a pair of Marshall combo amps with two 12-inch speakers each, or two Fender Vibroverbs. Meanwhile, Vaughan has had a custom amp built by Howard Dumble of Los Angeles.

"I destroy everything eventually, because I play so hard," he explains. "I run 'em so hot. The thing about Dumble is that it doesn't run hot, and so I don't have to worry about it."

Although he owns some ten guitars—including a 1958 Gibson ES-335 dot-neck, a Kay Barney Kessel model, a '57 Stratocaster bought from his brother, and a slew of inexpensive Japanese models—Strats are his favorite backup instruments. One is a stock 1962 with a maple fingerboard.

"It has a clearer tone," he says. "I use it mainly for quieter, cleaner types of things."

The other is a yellow '64, modified by Charley Wirz of Charley's Guitar Shop in Dallas to hold a single DiMarzio single-coil. Vaughan explains that when Wirz found it, the Strat had four humbucking pickups installed on it.

"I use it mainly when I need to have the '59 retuned," Vaughan says, "and I use it for slide sometimes. It's loud and raunchy. Charley fixed it so it's almost like a hollowbody. There are spaces cut into the body where the humbuckers used to be, and then he routed out in between them, and just put the pickguard down over it. It's almost like a bell, the way the body works. It's really an amazing sounding guitar."

In addition, Vaughan is excited about experimenting with a recently acquired late-'20s National resophonic.

Predictably, Vaughan makes sparse use of effects. Onstage, he generally has an Ibanez Tube Screamer. He notes: "I don't think I use it the way they made it to be used. I have it set so that it makes everything sound turned up. I also use a wah-wah once in a great while, but not really as a wah-wah. I just stomp down on it to fire up the treble, and then I turn it right down again."

When *Let's Dance* was mixed, Vaughan's solos were run through a Roland Dimension D in the studio.

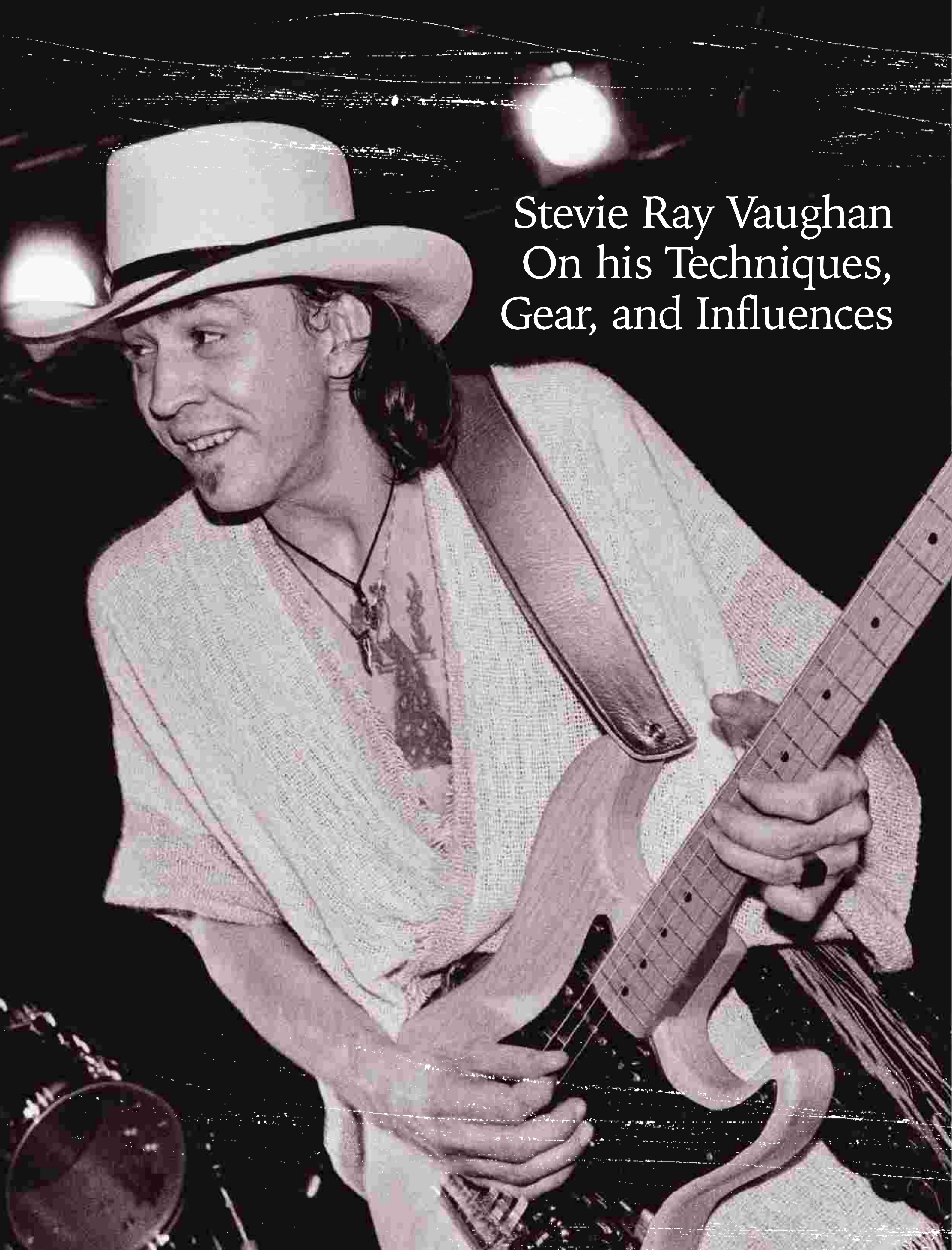
"It seems to work a little like a stereo chorus," Vaughan says. "You take a note that was hit hard, and it makes it sound more ornery—a little fatter."

Through April, Vaughan was in Dallas with Bowie's road band, rehearsing at the Las Colinas soundstage just north of the city. Then, in mid-May, two days before the tour was scheduled to begin, Vaughan quit—mainly to pursue his own career more fully. The action came rather abruptly, however, following a business dispute. Vaughan was replaced on the tour by veteran Bowie guitarist Earl Slick.

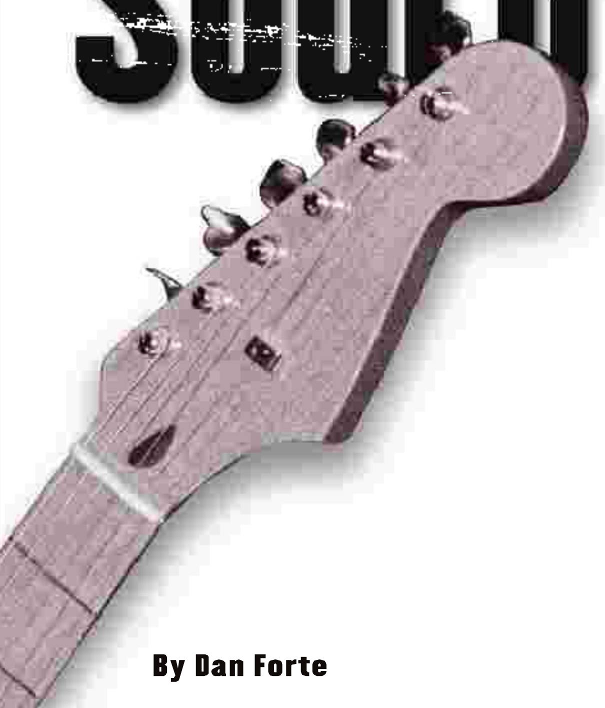
In any case, Vaughan is very optimistic, buoyant, and full of enthusiasm. He's pleased to have had the experience of working with Bowie, but he's also looking forward to the year ahead. He plans to play American venues into the summer, return to perform at Montreux in August, and then follow that up with a European tour with Double Trouble before returning to the United States.

"I learned a lot working with David Bowie," he says. "But I'm glad to be back with my band again. That was always my main concern, right from the start." *—Originally published in the August 1983 issue of* Guitar Player

Stevie Ray Vaughan On his Techniques, Gear, and Influences



Soul of the Blues



By Dan Forte

Several hours before show time, Stevie Ray Vaughan sits alone on a weary couch in a backstage dressing room, his head buried in his trusty, albeit beat-up, Stratocaster. Dressed in Japanese happi coat, wide-brim black gaucho hat, black slacks, and pointed-toe shoes, Vaughan limbers up, and greets the occasional visitor with a vice-like handshake and a bit of tentative conversation. It's a ritual the slight but wiry Texan has been through countless times, but he still appears a bit nervous.

Once plugged in onstage, however, a completely different Stevie Ray Vaughan emerges—cool, confident, flamboyant, and even a bit cocky. Before the crowd is finished applauding the opening instrumental, "Testify," he and the two-man rhythm section known as Double Trouble (bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris Layton) launch into Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile." For the next 90 minutes, each vocal phrase, guitar solo, and fill is delivered at full-throttle. Even during almost inaudible parts of his solo in the dirge-like "Tin Pan Alley," Vaughan's intensity never subsides. He doesn't just play his guitar—he *mauls* it, as evidenced by the nonexistent finish and 1/4"-deep scratches on the face of his battered '59 Fender Strat. By the end of the set—closing with Hendrix's sonic tour de force "Third Stone From The Sun"—Vaughan has played the guitar behind his head, off his shoulder like a violin, behind his back, and on the floor, standing over the cutaways with one hand firmly on the guitar's neck, the other pulling up on the vibrato bar.

While making vintage guitar collectors wince and teachers moan, Vaughan has given the biggest exposure in years to one of the most fundamental, but unsung musical forms: the blues. And with every achievement and accolade he has received since he burst onto the charts on David Bowie's critically acclaimed *Let's Dance*, the 30-year-old has shared his honors with the bluesmen who preceded him, and with the genre itself.

"Most of all, I'm glad to see the blues getting the recognition it deserves," the guitarist has emphasized on more than one occasion.

After being lifted out of the Austin, Texas, blues scene to play on *Let's Dance*, Vaughan went back to his hometown group, Double Trouble, and teamed up with A&R legend John Hammond to produce *Texas Flood*, which took top honors in *Guitar Player*'s 1983 Readers Poll as Best Guitar Album. In the same balloting, Vaughan racked up two more blue ribbons—completely dominating the New Talent category and edging out no less than Eric Clapton as Best Electric Blues player—to become the first triple-crown winner since Jeff Beck's 1976 hat trick.

With *Texas Flood* still selling strongly, Double Trouble released *Couldn't Stand the Weather*, which hit the Billboard pop chart at #144, leaped up to #63 in its second week, and bulleted to 37 and 31 in the following two weeks.

"What has happened, I guess," drawls Vaughan, "is that we've come from playing clubs to where we can pretty much fill a 5,000-seat hall now. We just worked our butts off."

Vaughan's popularity is as worthy of scrutiny as his phenomenal guitar playing. While numerous blues-based rockers have become guitar heroes after crossing over to the rock camp—including Clapton, Michael Bloomfield, and Jimi Hendrix—Vaughan is the first since fellow Texan Johnny Winter (who also eventually drifted into out-and-out rock and roll) to make the major leagues by sticking with the blues. His videos of "Love Struck Baby," "Couldn't Stand the Weather," and "Cold Shot" are in steady rotation on MTV's playlist, and "Pride And Joy" received substantial airplay on FM stations. He teamed with George Thorogood for a tribute to Chuck Berry at this year's Grammy awards, and he has appeared on such unlikely TV shows as *Solid Gold*.

Most people's first exposure to Vaughan's searing solos, of course, was via Bowie's *Let's Dance*. But even though the material was not the type of R&B he had mined in Texas bars for more than a decade, Vaughan's razor-edged leads were pure blues, relying heavily on Albert King for tones and riffs. *Texas Flood* revealed a debt to blues masters such as Jimmy Reed, Magic Sam, Lonnie Mack, Buddy Guy, and Hubert Sumlin, and paid that debt with interest. On tour in support of the album—opening for coliseum acts such as Men At Work, the Moody Blues, Huey Lewis and the News, and the Police—Vaughan riveted audiences with his passionate homages to Jimi Hendrix, including "Voodoo Chile," "Little Wing," and "Third Stone From The Sun."

While countless guitarists have been influenced by the creative genius of Hendrix, few have attempted to cover any of his songs. There are several obvious similarities between Vaughan and the late southpaw—each led a trio, had incredible control of feedback and volume with a minimum of effects devices, and could sing adequately but not well enough to make it strictly as a vocalist. But what sets Vaughan above other pretenders to the Hendrix throne is his ability to play lead and rhythm simultaneously. Like Hendrix, he fires a nonstop barrage of chords, licks, hammer-ons, pull-offs, and unorthodox tricks at the listener. Vaughan's guitar technique doesn't just impress—it overwhelms.

Instrumentals such as "Rude Mood" and "Scuttle Buttin'" are textbook studies of the pedal-to-the metal Vaughan style, while "Lenny" is reminiscent of Hendrix's most sensitive ballads, and "Stang's Swang" reveals a firm grounding in organ-trio guitarists such as Kenny Burrell, Grant Green, and early George Benson. Unlike many other guitar-based trios, Double Trouble overdubs next to nothing in the studio. The 12-inch pieces of vinyl are accurate representations of the sort of thing Vaughan & Co. have been playing onstage since they formed in 1978, following the guitarists stints with the Cobras and Triple Threat Revue. *Couldn't Stand the Weather* made use of a few of Vaughan's Texas buddies—saxophonist Stan Harrison, Fabulous Thunderbirds drummer Fran Cristina,

PHOTO: TRACY ANNE HART

and brother Jimmie Vaughan—and, at press time, he was finalizing plans to augment the trio further for his October debut at New York's Carnegie Hall. To be recorded for a possible live LP and video, the concert will tentatively include Jimmie Vaughan, organ legend Booker T. Jones, and the Tower Of Power horn section as special guests.

A lot has happened to Stevie Ray Vaughan since he was featured in the August '83 *Guitar Player*. In the following interview, he talks about his techniques and tricks, his major influences, his collection of Stratocasters, and the most important element to Double Trouble's sound: soul.

There seems to be a long tradition of Texas guitar players.

Yeah. I don't know if any of us knows what it is. It's just in the air, you know.

Does the environment of friendly competition improve the caliber of the players?

Sure, yeah. For some reason, nobody lets go of the soul of it. It's the same way with a lot of the San Francisco players. There are a lot of musicians in the Bay Area who do remember how to play from their heart—as opposed to a lot of the things in Los Angeles that are missing that. It's just show time. But in Texas, especially, there seem to be a lot of musicians interested in pulling for each other and working together, and it really, really helps a lot. It makes everybody a tighter unit, and it keeps you right in your heart. And that has a lot to do with your playing.

Austin musicians definitely have strong feelings of community, even though a band like Asleep At The Wheel plays western swing, the Fabulous Thunderbirds play blues, and Eric Johnson plays fusion.

It doesn't matter. People still work together.

Can you spot a Texas guitar player by hearing him?

Oh yeah. I don't know what it is. I just can hear it. Maybe it's the water [*laughs*].

What's the blues scene like in Austin now?

There are some crazy jam sessions going on down there. Hubert Sumlin is staying down there now, and Mel Brown is living there, and Lonnie Mack. He's a great cat. Also, Buddy Guy comes down and hangs out for two or three weeks a month. It ends up where all those guys are up there playing. And Mel Brown plays B-3 organ like nobody's business. Antone's closes at 2:00, but it's nothing out of the ordinary for it to be 4:30 when the last set is over—after starting at midnight. A four-hour set ain't too bad.

I heard stories years ago about a jam session at Antone's with B.B. King, yourself, and Luther Tucker.

Yeah, that was the night B.B. scared me to death. He sat on his amp and played rhythm for me for about four songs. And then he stood up and played one note [*picks up an acoustic guitar and plays a high, stinging, staccato note shimmering with finger vibrato*]. You know, one of those B.B. notes that makes you go, "Haaugh!"

What you just played sounded exactly like B.B. Did you work on that a lot?

I just listened.

When you first took up guitar, was it blues that you were mainly attracted to?

A lot—because of my brother Jimmie. He'd bring home records by B.B. and Buddy Guy. And he was the one who hit me with Lonnie Mack, too. The first record I ever bought was *The Wham of that Memphis Man*. Jimmie brought home a Hendrix record, and I went, "Whoa! What is this?" I'll never forget that.

Did Jimmie show you things on guitar, or did you just pick up things from hearing him around the house?

At first, he taught me a couple of things, and then he taught me how to teach myself—and that's the right way.

Your brother was heavily influenced by another Texas bluesman, Freddie King. Did that style rub off on you, as well?

Yeah, it did. I had that instrumental album of his [*Let's Hide Away and Dance Away*]. Jimmie used to know him pretty well, but Freddie wouldn't talk to me in public. In private, but not in public. I guess I was a young white boy he didn't want to be seen with [*laughs*]. I played with him once, sitting around a table when no one else was around.

What specifics did you get from various players?

I got a lot of the fast things I do from Lonnie Mack—just the ideas and the phrasing. Like on "Scuttle Buttin'" [*plays a barrage of chicken-picked pull-offs*]. That's really a Lonnie Mack thing. That's dedicated to him. I got a lot of turnarounds from Freddie King.

Who were the main blues players you heard on records?

Well, let's run 'em down. There was Buddy Guy, Muddy, of course, and all the various guitar players who were with him [*including Jimmy Rogers and Pat Hare*], Hubert Sumlin, Lonnie Mack, B.B., Albert King, Freddie, Albert Collins, Guitar Slim—he'd just turn it all the way up. I can just imagine people saying, "Slim, why do you always play so loud?" "Because it sounds like this" [*laughs*].

Johnny Winter was the first white Texas bluesman to make it on a big scale. Were you influenced much by him?

Yes, although I never heard him as much then. I listened more to people like Albert Collins, Albert and Freddie King, and Johnny Guitar Watson. But around '71 or '72, I got to jam a lot with Johnny over at Tommy Shannon's house. That was a little bit after his initial big success.

How did you meet Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton?

I've known Tommy for years and years—since about '69. I was in Dallas playing at this after-hours place called the Fog, and he had just left Johnny Winter. He claims that he walked in and saw this little midget playing guitar [*laughs*]. I was 15 or something. I wasn't supposed to be in that club. We've played together in bands off and on ever since. Chris and I have been together about six years, I guess. I met him through Joe Sublet of the Cobras. They were roommates. I went over to the house once, and Chris was in the kitchen with his headphones on, blasting away on the drums. When he finished, I told him I needed a drummer, so he quit his other band.

Was he basically a blues drummer when you found him?

No, but he could do it. It took him about 15 minutes to learn how to do a rub shuffle right. A lot of it was just natural.

Did you play in clubs in Dallas before you moved to Austin?

Yeah. I could make decent money there, playing the Cellar, but it wasn't the kind of place you'd want to hang too long. That was the only place that let me do what I wanted to do, because nobody cared about sh*t there. They just had strippers and crabs everywhere [*laughs*]. If you really wanted to come in there and play, they'd let you. A couple of times, people would get pissed and start shooting at the stage. You ducked and kept playing [*laughs*]. I played there from age 14 until I was 18. There was a Cellar in Dallas and one in Fort Worth. We'd play two sets in one town, drive to the other club, and play two more sets. We got 90 bucks a night per person, and we were never awake during the day, so there wasn't any way to spend it. The only reason I could play there was because my parents didn't know about it. I was trying to stay as close to this kind of music as I could, but, at the same time, I was going through a phase of playing through Marshalls—just turning up to 10 and being a teenager. I remember doing some Allman Brothers songs, which I liked at the time—skirting the outskirts—but we were also doing Buddy Guy and B.B. King stuff.

Have you had a hard time playing blues as an opening act to major rock bands?

No. The audiences reacted real well to it. I think more of the people on the Moody Blues tour were aware of what we were doing. When we played with Men At Work, it was still a lot of fun, but there were mainly 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds, and a few of them knew how to slingshot dimes, you know [*laughs*]. But a lot of those kids really went for it, even though they weren't expecting it.

Your playing on *Let's Dance* isn't along the lines of *Texas Flood*—it's more like Albert King.

I kind of wanted to see how many places Albert King's stuff would fit. It *always* does. I love that man. When that album first came out, Albert heard it. He said, "[*sneering*] Yeah, I heard you doin' all my sh*t on there. I'm gonna go up there and do some of yours" [*laughs*]. We were doing this TV show right outside of Toronto, and during the lunch break, Albert went around to everybody in there looking for an emery board. I didn't think anything of it. We were jamming on the last song, "Outskirts Of Town," and when it comes to the solo he goes, "Get it, Stevie!" I started off, and I look over and he's pulling out this damn emery board, filing his nails, sort of giving me this sidelong glance [*laughs*]. I loved it! Lookin' at me like, "Uh-huh, I got you swinging by your toes." He's a heavy cat.

Do you ever play with your thumb to get an Albert King sound?

I play with a pick and a finger. I use the round end of the pick, too. You break less of them, and don't get tangled up in the strings. Sometimes, I play with both together, or I'll palm the pick and use my fingers. Sometimes, I'll just "Hubert" it [*play with bare fingers a la Hubert Sumlin*].

Is that to get a variety of tones?

Different tones, different moods. It depends on how the amps are working that night, how dead the strings are, how much I can hear, and how crazy I'm feeling.

On "Cold Shot," did you play through a Leslie to get that underwater sound?

It's a Fender Vibratone—which is basically like a Leslie. It's a 10" speaker with a Styrofoam rotor in front of it. The speaker is stationary, but a drum with a slit in it revolves, and then you mic it from both sides.

On *Couldn't Stand The Weather*, were there any tracks where you cut a rhythm part and overdubbed a lead, or vice versa?

No. On some of the songs, I just played and did the vocal later—which sometimes is a mistake, because you play differently when you're not singing than you would if you were singing along. A lot of times, the licks won't match the phrasing of the vocals. Most of the solos were cut live. I redid one line in "Voodoo" because my amp went crazy on me. The punch-in didn't come off very well. It still doesn't sound right to me.

***Texas Flood* sounds like there are hardly any overdubs.**

There aren't—only if I broke a string or something.

So you played the lead and rhythm in the same take, rather than laying down a rhythm track and soloing over it later?

Right. We redid a few vocals, but some of them were live, too. That was mainly to go back if a word was left out, or not real clear. Plus, we got a better vocal sound by redoing them. I don't think that's cheating too much.

Do you set up in the studio the same as onstage, or do you use drum booths and headphones?

For the first record, we pretty much set up like we do onstage, but we did have a few baffles between us. We went ahead and used headphones—like on one ear. We couldn't see the control room. It was at the other end of this place with a bunch of stuff in between, and no window. I like it a lot that way. That was at Jackson Browne's rehearsal studio—called Downtown—in Los Angeles. For *Couldn't Stand The Weather*, we were in New York's Power Station, and all the walls separating the rooms are glass, so we were separated, but we could still see each other. So I could go in and play louder than sh*t.

Do you usually record pretty loud?

Sometimes. And, sometimes, real quiet—like on "Tin Pan Alley."

What about "Voodoo Chile"?

I had it up as loud as I could, and I was in the same room with the amps.

Do you use the same amps in the studio as onstage?

Yes. Two Fender Vibroverbs. They came out in '63—they're number five and six off the production line—but I bought them in two different places at two different times. It's basically like a Super Reverb with a 15 and a shorter cabinet, and it has no midrange knob. My favorite setup used to be two Vibroverbs and two Supers—just stack 'em up, and let the Vibroverbs handle the bottom. I had one Super set clean, and the other where I could just turn it up or down wherever I wanted it.

You don't use the Super Reverbs now?

Right now, I use a Howard Dumble 150-watt. He calls it the Steel String Singer. I call it the King Tone Consoul [*laughs*]—that's s-o-u-l. It's like an overgrown Fender tube amp. Some Dumbles—like the Overdrive Special—you've got to know what you're doing with them, because they'll get away from you, and take you with 'em.

Was John Hammond in the studio for the first album?

No. He wasn't there at all, except for the mixdown and the mastering. This time, he was there a lot for the recording.

Did that affect the recording environment much?

He wants you to sound exactly like yourself. He doesn't like you to overproduce. In other words, he does it the other way around. He keeps you sounding like yourself, instead of trying to change you, like most producers do.

Do you have any guitars that aren't Strats?

I have a 1958 Gibson dot-neck ES-335 and a '48 Airline that's a little bit smaller but the same shape as a Barney Kessel Kay. It has three pickups with a 4-position toggle switch: Bass, Middle, Treble, or all three. I've got an old Rickenbacker prototype with a flat top, and I'm giving that to Hubert. And I've got this 1928 National that belonged to Blind Boy Fuller. Byron Barr, my guitar roadie, gave it to me. Sometimes, I'll pull it out at the end of a set, and sit down and play "Rude Mood" or a little slide. I'd planned on using it on the last record, but we got sidetracked, and we never got around to it.

Do you play slide in open tuning?

I usually just tune up the *G* string to *A*♭ and leave everything else the same.

How did you go about recreating the sounds you heard on Hendrix's records?

You just keep listening and trying to find the sound, because it's in your hands as much as anything. It's the way you play. There are different techniques to playing everybody's styles, and it's not just necessarily the amp or the guitar. It's the way you pick, and the way you hold the guitar. For instance, T-Bone Walker played like this most of the time [*holds guitar horizontally, away from his body*], and the tone is different when you play that way. Can you hear the difference? [*Holds guitar against his body and plays the same lick, getting a bassier tone.*] It's the way your fingers hit the strings, and you're more prone to pick closer to the neck when you hold the guitar like T-Bone.

Your '59 Strat has the vibrato bar anchored off the bass side of the bridge. Did you set it up that way because Jimi Hendrix's guitar bodies were upside down?

Well, I started listening to people, and I noticed that when Otis Rush used one, he had it on the top. He played upside-down. And Hendrix had the guitar upside-down, except he strung it regular. It seemed to me that the people who did that the best had it on top, so I moved mine. Sometimes, it does get in the way. I've had it tear my sleeve halfway off.

So instead of working it with the little finger of your picking hand, it lays right in the middle of your palm.

Yeah, and I've got the springs set up so I couldn't move it with my little finger, anyway. It's pretty tight, with four springs tightened all the way up. That's how I can do "Third Stone From The Sun" and still be in tune. See, I have my old Strat set up where it won't go up at all. On my newer Strats, the vibrato handles are on the bottom—in the regular place. The orange one and Lenny—both of their vibratos will go pretty far up and down, and they're set up a lot lighter. All the guitars have personalities of their own, and they feel completely different. They each have different sounds. Like the brown one sounds real good for jazzy-type things or "'Lenny." It's a '63 or '64 that my wife—whose name is Lenny—found for me.

What about the old beat-up one?

That's my first wife [*laughs*]. The new one with my name on the fretboard, I call Main, for main guitar. It's a Hamiltone, built by James Hamilton of Buffalo, New York. It's basically Strat-shaped, but a little thicker, and the construction of the neck is pretty much like a Gibson Super400—except it goes all the way through the body. So the vibrato is on the neck, basically dead center right there. You can pop the low *E* string, and the whole guitar has this reverb you can hear even without an amp, because of the springs being in the neck. It has an ebony fretboard that's the same width as my beat-up '59. Then, they added binding on the outside of that, because I have big hands, and I always play barre chords with my thumb wrapped around. What happens a lot of times is that my thumb will end up pushing the low *E* string accidentally. So the wider neck keeps me from doing that. The pickups in there now are EMGs with a little computer chip preamp in them, so there's a battery in the guitar, of course. I like it a lot. They say the battery will last six months, but I can hear it going down. You can hear it in the tone—it gets fuzzier, like it's straining. When it's got a brand-new battery in there, it sounds clear as a bell. And smooth. It'll sing to you.

You've also got a white Strat with three Danelectro lipstick pickups.

That was put together by Charley Wirz at Charley's Guitar Shop in Dallas, Texas. He also gave me the yellow one with one pickup in the bass position. That one is hollowed out from the neck to the bridge, because the guy from Vanilla Fudge had put four humbucking pickups in there. It has a pretty cool tone. Charley came up with the design for the white one with the Danelectros. He also found me the orange 1960. All of the Strats have bass frets. I get them from Gibson, or I use Dunlop jumbo bass frets—the biggest ones I can get. I don't have to replace them twice a year, and there's a lot more sustain. It's a lot easier to get under the strings when you use big strings like I do. You can work yourself to death with those little frets. Instead of the note fading out when you bend a string, it'll get bigger when you bend with the jumbo frets.

Do any of your Strats have maple necks?

Lenny does. It has a real clear tone, and the pickups are microphonic—you can hear it when you hit the pickguard. But when you play it soft, it sounds great. When I first got the guitar, it had a rosewood fretboard, but it was thinner, and that bothered me. So I put a copy of a Fender maple neck on there that Billy Gibbons gave me. I like the rosewood necks usually, because, for one thing, when you sweat, you don't get blisters. It seems like the finish on a maple neck gets hotter, and there's more friction. As hard as I play and as much as I sweat, I get sore enough as it is. There's a fatter sound on the rosewood, as far as I can tell. It's not as bright. The ebony fretboard seems a little bit clearer, but it's fat, too.

Which guitars have you recorded with most?

Lenny on the song "Lenny," and everything else has been the '59. I'd like to record with the one with the Danelectro pickups. I like it a lot.

How do you do some of the tricks you do onstage, like getting the guitar behind your back so fast?

As I'm spinning around, I'm taking the strap loose, and the guitar pivots behind my back. Then, I rehook it behind my back. It's really playing the same way, except you've got to hold the guitar out a little bit, and you just can't see as well.

In "Third Stone From The Sun," you have the guitar laying on the stage while you straddle it, pulling up on the neck with one hand and on the wang bar with the other.

Yeah, I wouldn't recommend that anybody do that on their 335 [*laughs*]. A Stratocaster is a pretty tough thing, though. Then, I figured out

how to get the guitar to rumble. I put it on the middle pickup, turn the tone knob down, grab it by the wang bar, and just shake it on the floor.

Do you use any effects besides the wah-wah on the Hendrix tunes?

Just an Ibanez Tube Screamer. I have Univibes, but I don't use them. I use the Vibratone for that effect. I don't have any straight distortion devices. I use the Tube Screamer for that.

Who works on your guitars?

Charley Wirz or Michael Stevens in Austin, depending on who's available and what I'm having done. Certain things, both of them do very well. Other things, one of them does better.

Do you string all the Strats the same?

Yeah. I use a .013, a .015 or .016—depending on what shape my fingers are in—a .019 plain, then .028, .038, .060 or .056. If I go down to a .018 on the *G* string, it feels like a rubber band to me.

Do you have 3-way or 5-way switches on the Strats?

Five-way. I use all the positions for different tones.

With the amount of amplification you use, do you still pick fairly hard with your right hand?

Yeah—terribly. That's just how I play. Sometimes, I literally pull the strings off. I can deaden a set of strings completely after one set, because I play 'em hard, and I do a lot of this [*snaps bass string*] to get bottom notes, like Albert Collins. Sometimes, though, I play really soft. That's probably the best Albert King tone I can get.

When you got the '59 Strat, was it as beat-up as it looks now?

[*Laughs.*] It wasn't in real good shape. You could still get a jar of model car paint and go around the edges to make it look decent, but that continued to wear off. You asked if I pick hard—well, look at the top of the guitar [*which is worn away a good ?"*]. That's from picking. It's gradually sounding different, because I let it dry out too much. I bet if I start oiling it up, it'll start fattening up some. The body is a '59, but the neck is a '62, I believe. In the body it says, "LF 59." I came to find out that was Louis Fuentes, not Leo Fender. But Louis Fuentes was a good cat. You never heard a Stratocaster sound meaty like that one.

The tendency on the part of most white blues-rock artists has been to eventually drift more towards mainstream rock.

We try to keep it going in both directions. There's no reason for us to leave behind what we've got, you know, but there is a good reason to expand on it. I'd like to keep it as a trio—keep that identity—but I have nothing against playing with great horn players or keyboard players or other guitar players. Or more than one drummer, even.

"Stang's Swang" is still blues, but it's a departure from the type of stuff you're known for.

I wrote that four or five years ago. I like guys like Kenny Burrell and Grant Green a lot. I like Django Reinhardt a lot, too, and Wes Montgomery, of course.

What's the turnaround on that song?

I don't know. I don't know what key I'm in sometimes. I just try to listen.

Are you completely self-taught when it comes to any theoretical vocabulary?

I don't know any of that stuff.

What about the chord voicings you use?

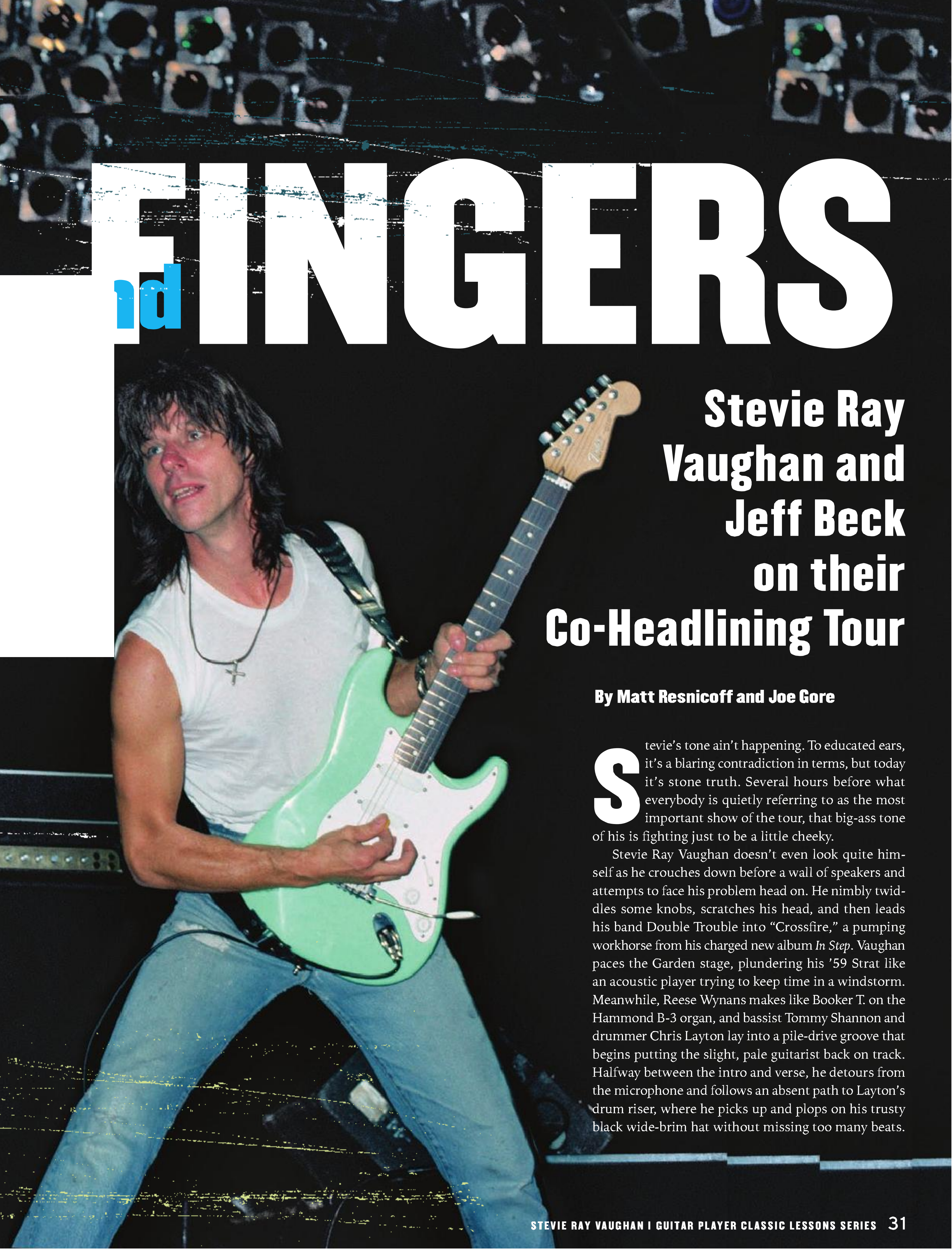
I just look for things that sound right.

So if you're playing something like, say, a diminished 7th. . .

I don't know it. I almost learned how to read chord charts doing some of those Bowie things. But as soon as I learned how to read the charts, they took the charts away! Most of the time, I'd listen to a couple of run-throughs while he was doing his vocals to get an idea of where the song was going. Then, I'd just figure out in my head where this Albert King lick or that Albert King lick would fit [*laughs*]. —*Originally published in the October 1984 issue of* Guitar Player

Of MEAT

PHOTO: KEN SETTLE



nd FINGERS

Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jeff Beck on their Co-Headlining Tour

By Matt Resnicoff and Joe Gore

Stevie's tone ain't happening. To educated ears, it's a blaring contradiction in terms, but today it's stone truth. Several hours before what everybody is quietly referring to as the most important show of the tour, that big-ass tone of his is fighting just to be a little cheeky.

Stevie Ray Vaughan doesn't even look quite himself as he crouches down before a wall of speakers and attempts to face his problem head on. He nimbly twiddles some knobs, scratches his head, and then leads his band Double Trouble into "Crossfire," a pumping workhorse from his charged new album *In Step*. Vaughan paces the Garden stage, plundering his '59 Strat like an acoustic player trying to keep time in a windstorm. Meanwhile, Reese Wynans makes like Booker T. on the Hammond B-3 organ, and bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris Layton lay into a pile-drive groove that begins putting the slight, pale guitarist back on track. Halfway between the intro and verse, he detours from the microphone and follows an absent path to Layton's drum riser, where he picks up and plops on his trusty black wide-brim hat without missing too many beats.

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That does it. By the time he's into the solo, Vaughan is toeheeling it across the platform, pecking deep into a bent string from below and inside. His vibrato is so intense that the neck, rather than the string, shakes freely in his powerful hand. He whips the low *E* string one final time, swings his arm and returns to the mike to finish things off. A grateful tip of the hat, and then dead stage.

Jeff Beck is just a touch less superstitious. There's certainly no showbiz voodoo at hand where he and his bandmates convene later that evening, just before the big room darkens—a genuinely breathless three-way hug helps spread the tension around, but can't quite take the edge off. After nine years puttering in his garage, eight months writing and recording *Guitar Shop*, and three weeks of hurried rehearsal, a thin, black nylon curtain is all that stands between him and that big moment.

Once onstage, though, Beck is moved to the next plane. His set is a true reflection of self—kinetic, sexual, and streetready—and a liberal extension of form. He works through Charles Mingus' "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" with the kind of dark, unearthly simplicity that makes Madison Square Garden feel like some massive space-age jazz club. Even amid the sonic choreography served up by the keyboardist Tony Hymas and the almost criminally proficient Terry Bozzio on drums, Beck thrives wildly. With few effects to recreate, and even fewer progressions and modulations to speak of, many of his new pieces survive by touch and touch alone. Simply put, Beck's a natural, a veteran of more than two decades of histrionic trailblazing that have led him right back down the path of pure, centered tone. It's precisely that control, and the passion to keep it sharp, that place him at the vanguard of the guitar-as-voice movement among conscionable rock players.

But Beck is also a spectacle. With not much more than a whammy, a pick stroke, and a prayer, he knows just how to play a crowd. He zaps and stings with piercing, bent harmonics and rubbery pull-offs, all expertly punctuated with seasoned rock posturing (like his spiritual ally Nigel Tufnel of Spinal tap, Beck knows there's far more to a show than a great solo). On his new ballads, Beck is positively transcendental, sailing whispers and cries and swells deep into the hall. The sleek, high-tech rockers are paced to move. When a straightaway opens up, he swerves in on big, wide notes, careens over the edges of tonality, and rides it out hard with fast, funny shortcut phrases. With a checkered flag wave of the arm, he screeches to a stop, tunes and spins, and takes off again.

It's no big marketing accident that Beck, 45, and Vaughan, 34, took turns headlining on a whirlwind tandem tour through America last fall. Way back during a time when content meant more than a package, no one would have blinked an eye at a double-bill boasting two extraordinary guitar players. Today, such a pairing seems about as likely as the common ground shared by a white Texas extraction of Albert King and a British auto mechanic who's Cliff Gallup incarnate. As it turns out, Beck and Vaughan are both vintage with a twist—a big Texas wide-brim and a porkpie, two stock Stratocasters, so far-flung and yet so undeniably joined at the hip. In a rare peaceful moment in Cleveland, for the first time since the start of their association, they begin to find out just how tightly.

Both of your styles are grounded firmly in blues tradition, but you each take their tradition in very different directions.

Vaughan: I play it less original than most people I've heard. This is one of the things that blows my mind about what Jeff does, that he takes the roots of it and is able to make it go way out there. That's what Buddy Guy did, and Hubert Sumlin and Muddy Waters. They all changed it up and did their own thing with it.

Beck: But I wasn't even close to it. I was three-and-a-half thousand miles away in suburban England, and all I had was this fuzzy radio to listen to, and I'd read things and try to steal records when no one's looking [*laughs*]. I used to go and listen for hours and wear all the records out and then just buy one. Befriend your local record-store guy—that was the way to do it. That was a big awakening for me. And going to art school was great, because we'd just lend each other records and drink. That's all we could do.

The records that are more meaningful to you were made in a more spontaneous time. Things just don't work that way anymore.

Beck: That's the phenomenon of the '50s. The technology was as it was, the talent was ripe and ready for picking, and thank God [producer] Sam Phillips was there and in love with it and captured it. He gave us the definitive sound of rock and roll. There were others, of course—lots of rockabilly styles. But Phillips somehow channeled those sounds and solidified the character that I call rock and roll.

How can you recapture that spontaneity?

Beck: Not easily. On this last album, I tried hard to get there, and I was really lucky things fell into place. I was in the right studio—Jimmy Page's place. I'm sure he maintains to this day that the '50s rock and roll was the stuff. You know, everybody tries to get that Scotty Moore guitar. It was an *illusion* of sound, rather than the technical presence. A lot of those Elvis records, the drums weren't loud at all. They were just distorted [*laughs*]!

Vaughan: It's something less than the quality of the mics and stuff—it's almost like electronics are too damn good for our own good. Today, most horns sound too skinny. You can't hear 'em. But you go listen to an old record with a sax player who's perfect, and it's because the mic was screwed up, or only picked up certain frequencies. It purified it. It didn't reproduce anything—it's just what you needed. A lot of my favorite amps are that way.

Beck: Yeah, today things sound too tinny. You have to induce the old ambience with fake digital reverbs and all that sort of thing—which I hate. I'd much rather be on the spot, and wait for the red light and just go, and not have to go back for technical reasons—just artistic reasons. People have lost a sense of that. This striving for perfection and intonation and all that makes it bland, and in trying to get one thing, you cancel out the other in the process. What can you do? Who can you turn to? Now, all the good stuff is gathering dust in the museum of recording.

Vaughan: I have an idea about that. This may be just the twisted way I see things, but it seems that rhythms used to come from things like trains, walking down the street, riding horses, and little simple engines. In this day and age, it's more jets and conveyor belts, and there ain't no rhythm there. People aren't hearing it.

Beck: That '50s and '60s stuff is direct, human emotion on tape. The drummer's slightly out, but so is everybody else, because that's how the human is. And along comes the LinnDrum—click-click-perfect—and you're pinned onto that. Whether you like it or not, you're going to get on that train [*snaps fingers*] at that rate, and you're going to stay on it, and it forces you to do things you wouldn't normally do. I'm not decrying perfection in digital sequencers, because I've enjoyed playing with them. As I said, the very fact that they *make* you do things can be turned to an advantage—to get out of yourself a side of your playing which *is* vicious precision.

But is it a lost cause? Is there a way of recapturing that essence?

Beck: [*Sighs.*] That's a tough one. Part of the reason I'm sitting here is because I believe in real music. A drummer like Terry and a

keyboardist like Tony can go any route you want, but still enjoy the performance and the interaction of playing real music. That's what I'm here to say. If you're a kid locked up in a bedroom with loads of high-tech stuff—well, that's not the way it is, and you shouldn't be pinned down to it just because the record industry has made it like that. There are other ways. There were for hundreds of years. I hope the '90s will eliminate a bit of that corporate push-button music that I just loathe.

Vaughan: There are people who still like to play. I personally wouldn't know how to play with a bunch of machines. When I was learning how to play off records, I might be able to play right along with it, but then I'd go out and try to play with somebody, and I couldn't. I had to learn. It's the same thing in a lot of ways.

Beck: You're locking into a person's groove, and you fully understand that groove. You understand the slight error of timing, and that is the glory of it all, the joy of it.

Vaughan: A song needs to breathe. The rhythm needs to breathe. Sometimes, the best way to get some punch out of something is to slow down right before you hit it. Kind of like a slingshot—*pow*!

Beck: Exactly. I used to fool around with a snare drum and brushes, just to try to get *behind* the record.

Vaughan: Yeah!

Beck: There was this song, I forget what it was called. It wasn't even rock and roll. It was a trad jazz thing with a trumpet playing and the snare just going along. I couldn't play trumpet, but I just knew exactly what the drummer was doing, and I practiced and practiced until you couldn't really tell that I was playing along with it. Then, I started to play guitar over it, because I understood what I'd already been doing. That was when I was seven or eight. I bought a snare drum.

Vaughan: When did you start, man?

Beck: Back then. That's when I started getting locked into it. My first musical instrument was a snare drum.

Vaughan: Mine was a shoebox, and I was seven, too [*laughs*].

In dealing with covers, Stevie goes for a tip-of-the-hat approach, throwing Hubert Sumlin slides into a Howlin' Wolf tune—making it your own, but with a nostalgic understanding. With Jeff, the vocabulary is very '90s, but you can still hear a touch of Cliff Gallup, even in "Freeway Jam" [*Blow By Blow*].

Beck: That's in the blood, you know? Things like that don't go away easily. It's stupid to try to put on a new suit of clothes and pretend you're not connected—that you're so hip, so '90s. There's some good stuff that kids today would like to hear, even if it's touched upon lightly.

Vaughan: If it's taken further, great, but, sometimes, I just want to play somebody else's song because I want to feel like I just heard it. When I get that feeling, I can play it better. It's expressing the music, and it has nothing to do with, "Yeah, I did that song." It's just, "Wouldn't it be cool to play that song?"

You both have a very strong sense of the placement of the right hand on the guitar. Do you think about that?

Beck: Not me. I'm just thinking about

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getting through the song without f**king up [*laughs*].

Vaughan: I'm just trying to find the most tone I can get. Sometimes, I can find it. Sometimes, I want to choke my amp. But then there are the nights when it doesn't seem that I've got anything to do with it. That's the one you always play for. There have been nights when I start playing chord solos, and I don't know any of the chords [*laughs*]! There have been nights when I completely lost it, and by the time it struck me, I wouldn't even know what song I was playing anymore. Sometimes it's effortless, and sometimes it's a struggle, but the chill bumps are worth it when you get 'em.

Is this tour working out?

Beck: I think it is. I'm not too happy with our set. Stevie, you've been much more constant with yours.

Vaughan: This is what's funny, that we're lookin' at y'all and saying, "Oh, man, this is happening!" [*Laughs*.]

Beck: I've gone from not working at all, really. I mean, I'm guilty of slacking on the guitar. Nine years since a serious tour of my own is way too long. And to suddenly jump in and go for the throat on an album and then spring directly onto the stage, it feels like I've just started out. On this tour, I've never felt more like a beginner. I would have preferred another two months of rehearsals to nail a few of these problems, and get the set so it just goes *wallop*, straight up. I feel it's a little bit funny. I should have rehearsed them a bit more during the recording, but there was no time. The focus was what was going onto tape that day.

Vaughan: We ended up in the same spot, except it was *because* we were touring all the time. We didn't get the chance to stop and look at what we wanted to do for this tour. We ended getting locked up into old ways. This is the first time I've ever used a set list.

Is there any sense of competition, or do you work off one another?

Beck: There is a certain sensation of worrying about how things are going. Every night, I check Stevie out.

Vaughan: And I check him out every night.

Beck: I listen to the audience, and I listen to where he's at in his set. It's just showbiz, a natural thing. "Hey, how's he playing? How's he sounding? How's the room?" All these things are hitting me all the time—from the minute I walk in and first hear the sound. It's a blast.

Vaughan: The better they're doin', the better it makes me feel. Of course, it'll kick you in the butt [*laughs*], but that's okay.

Beck: No two audiences are the same. Some numbers go down almost two well, and it throws you. You think, "What the hell was *that* all about? It wasn't that good." Some other nights you can be playing what you thought was the most blistering stuff, and it goes over so-so. It's really strange.

When the two of you talk about your music, you use very emotional terms. You never talk about showmanship. But there is a cultural iconography defining you both as guitar heroes. Do you think about that?

Beck: Yeah. Not when I'm onstage. It usually happens the night before, or any other time. You know, after the show I'll cry, "I really did shit." But, onstage, you really don't have time to worry about it. If you stop long enough to worry about it, you would just implode. Your whole nervous system would disintegrate. If you start worrying about the first clam, the first big glitch, it would be hard to pick yourself up. It's kind of like boxing. If you get punched, you've just got to punch back.

Vaughan: I don't consider myself a guitar hero. I just have fun playing guitar.

Beck: People do run amok with their compliments sometimes. I've had the most overblown compliments you could ever have. But what do you do? Do you deny it or ignore it? You just have to let it roll off. Otherwise, you get bigheaded or nervous. It's not a good thing to listen closely to what people say.

Who selected "I'm Going Down" as the encore jam?

Beck: I've always thought that song, when it's played with the right gung-ho approach, is just the most powerful song ever written, and it still holds up. It's a powerhouse, wall-to-wall chords, with a nastiness about it that I haven't found in any other song.

Do you think people are expecting you guys to play more together at these gigs?

Beck: Um, probably. But if it has been billed incorrectly, that's not our fault. I mean, with this "Stevie Ray Vaughan/Jeff Beck" situation, it might just have drifted out to the world at large as a cooperation-type thing, but I think people realize that we're doing two different sets. When the tour came up, I just thought we were going to be doing a double-barreled, double-headlining thing, and whatever happens afterwards happens.

Vaughan: I would be more than happy for us to be able to write something, but we haven't had a chance.

Beck: That would be the ultimate, but it's just crazy. Last night was the first time I slept a full night, because we had a day off. There are two separate soundchecks, and that hogs most of the day. Load-in is at 9:00 in the morning. And we have to think about getting enough rest to play our individual sets. It's a monstrous task.

Very few of the recent technical developments have held much interest for either of you. What's missing today?

Beck: What's missing? Nothing. The less there is between me and my strings and the people, the better I like it. I don't really want to go out that backstage door having painted a false picture for some kids who dream about a sound that I've just pushed a button to get. Although Steve Lukather's sound just scares me. He has devoted so much time to perfecting the rack technique, which is something I just don't want to mess with. Let's say that somebody wheeled in a rack and said, "This is the sound. Plug in, and your troubles will be over." I might enjoy it like mad for a couple of nights, but I think I'd be looking back to my old set, just to get out of the guitar what is readily available the way Fender designed it. If you can embellish the sound just enough to give you freedom of expression without going through this mass of circuitry, then that's good. The more you go through, the more you squash up that signal, the more you've got to blow it up again at the other end. It's really just a maze of unnecessary deviation.

Vaughan: I have problems with just using a simple splitter box [*laughs*]. It's got a plug that goes in the middle, and then a bunch of cords that come out and go to my different amps. When we were in the studio, I was using a bunch of amps. I turned the Fuzz Face on, and it would work through this amp—except that other amps would go half-volume and start going *nbeeneeber*. And other days, when I would turn the Fuzz Face on, it would work fine. We wouldn't even unplug it, and the next day, it wouldn't work. I wonder what would happen if I had a rack?

Beck: The funny thing about it is I could swear that if Steve Lukather and I decided to swap gear, he couldn't play mine, and I certainly wouldn't know what to do with his. And that's good. Let him have that, and let those other guys have the Rockman and that processed sound, because that's the way they're comfortable. And I understand fully why: They've engineered out all the glitches and noise that would be on *my* setup, to enable them to do immensely fast runs like Spanish

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arpeggios and all this, because that's what they want to impress people with. But if they pick up my guitar, forget it! That ain't gonna come out. It's a very unforgiving thing. Same as Stevie's. It's very crude to play with these setups, but I think it's the way we play best.

The Strat requires a lot of hand strength. And you both use fairly macho actions on top of that.

Beck: That's part of the reason I started playing it onstage, because I found that the energy level was 50 times more than sitting around at home. And it's better to have something that's tuned up for that, rather than a sloppy action that makes you say, "Oh God! I wish it was harder to play. It's too easy." Then you start sliding downhill. You have to have this thing just above you, pulling you, making you work.

Vaughan: If I put smaller strings on there so they don't hurt, I can't get the same sound. Then my tendency is to play harder, and I just tear things off. Sometimes, at home, I either tune down to *C* and leave the same strings on, or I put lighter strings on, and use a lighter pick so I start remembering about a lighter touch. But when I get on the stage, I really need the big strings.

What physical price do you pay?

Vaughan: We're both missing part of our fingers.

Beck: I broke my thumb.

Vaughan: And we've both worn off part of our fingernails and stuff.

Beck: You know, this first finger *is* my pick, after losing the real pick—I dropped that out ten years ago. But I realized after three gigs that I was in big trouble, because I couldn't use this fingernail anymore. It just went. So I have to use a pick a bit until that grows back. I don't want to go back to using a pick.

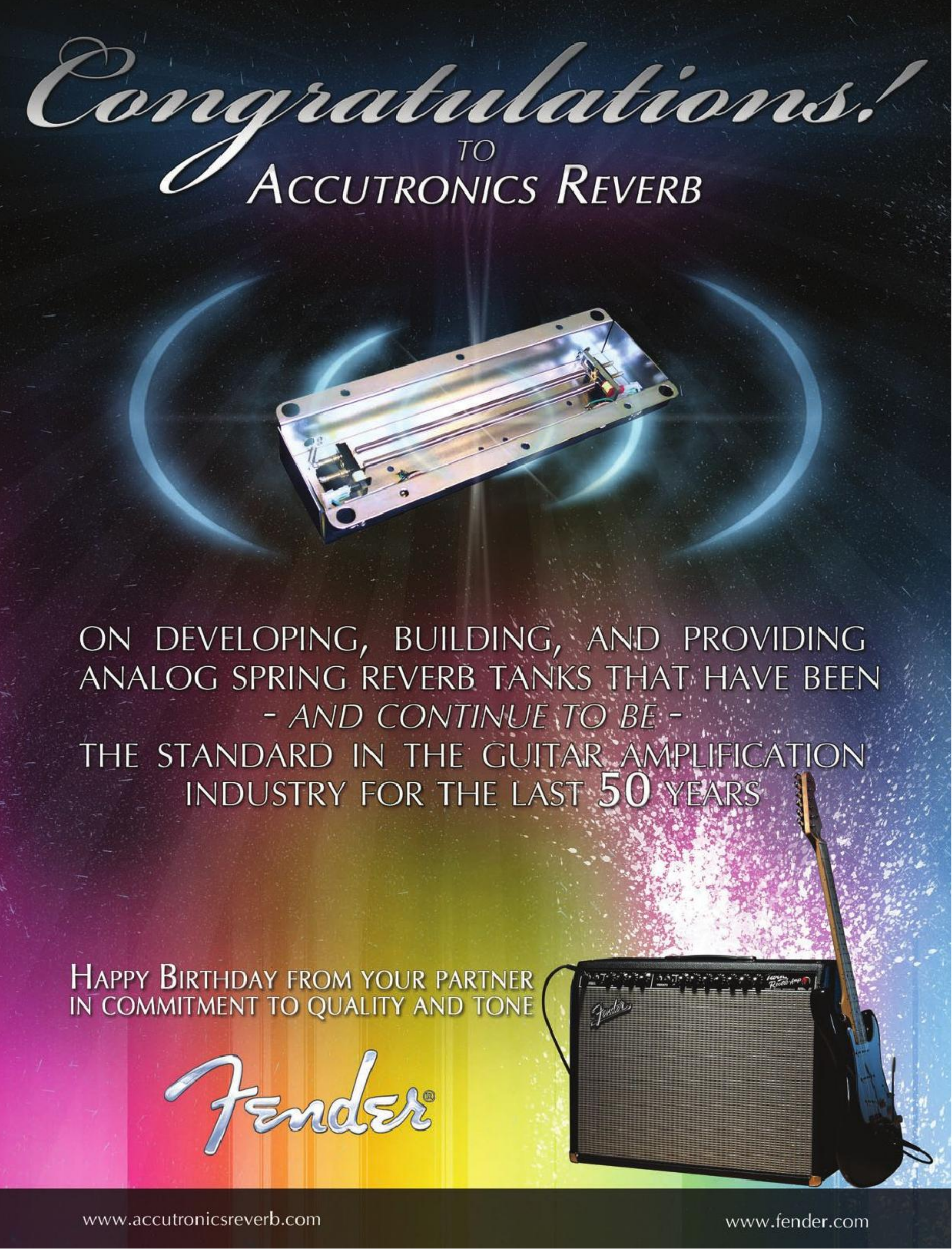
Vaughan: A lot of your tones are really tones of meat and fingers. It's a lot warmer, and a lot more personal.

Beck: That's right, because I've got to grab hold of each string, and snap it down.

Vaughan: But you know, the first time I ever played one of Buddy Guy's guitars—this was about 13 or 14 years ago—the strings were so little I couldn't feel 'em. I had to look. And he would never break a string [*laughs*]. And his *tone*! It really boils down to what the person is looking for. A lot of people look at it like if it's too difficult, it's just too difficult. If it's easier, then that's the way they want it. And that works for a lot of people. They just grew up playing that way. Like Albert King. He uses about the same size strings I do, but for his strength, the probably feel like nothin'. I swear, one of these days I'll probably end up where half my guitars are strung backwards, because it makes more sense to me upside down. I'll string one up that way, I'll find new places to play, and all the patterns I usually play will make more sense because I can see where they go. But so far, it only lasts about a month, and then I start wanting to go back the other way. Eventually, I'll probably end up where I'll do it half-and-half. It's probably about the same thing as Jeff working with cars. It's like a new thing—a different world.

Vaughan: I probably should be getting ready to go, but I love hanging with this guy.

Beck: Oh, yeah, we're playing tonight. I wondered why we were in Cleveland. Stevie travels on a bus, and he usually leaves the same night—which is a real drag, because that's the precious time when we could be loitering about,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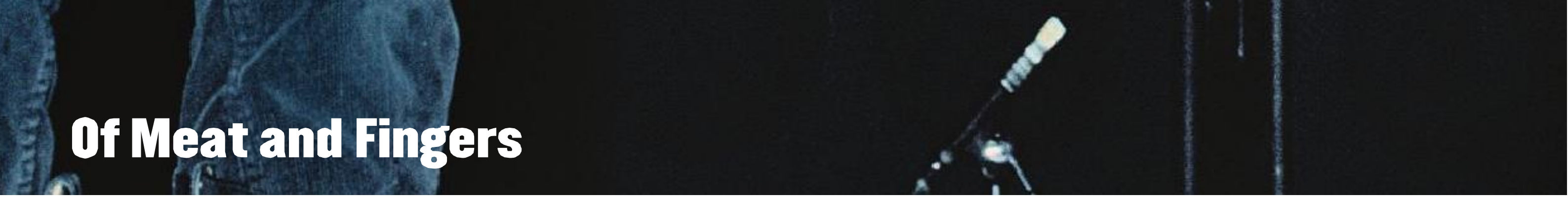

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causing trouble in bars and that sort of thing.

Vaughan: Getting to know this guy is one of the coolest things about the tour for me. When I first started listening to you, I was probably eight or nine—something like that.

Beck: No you weren't. You were much older than that [*laughs*].

Vaughan: It has been a lifelong thing to me, listening to you, man, and for me it's an honor to be out here with you now. And I'm not just being a parrot talking sh*t. This is the real deal.

Beck: I don't know what to add. Without wishing to sound patronizing, I think Stevie's playing the state-of-the-art blues at the moment. There's no one who has that tone, and the venom that goes with it. I mean, with Buddy [Guy] the other night, that was just the most incredible stuff I've ever heard in my life. At the Legends club—Buddy's club—we all jammed. It was so thrilling. I'd actually said to the lads, "Shroud me so I don't have to get up, because I really, really don't want to get up." I was terrified, but in spite of that, I went along, because I couldn't resist seeing you and Buddy playing. Seeing Buddy in his element, I didn't mind getting up there, because that is as close you can come to the heart of the blues, as I know it.

To kids, the idea of "just picking up a guitar and expressing yourself" might not seem good enough.

Beck: Unfortunately, the glam thing is drawing kids out of schools. They want the girls and they want the cars, they want all the things that are bad [*laughs*]! Or good, as the case may be. That's wrong. I never dreamt of being able to play in public when I was in my front room back home. I just thought, "This is great. I'm enjoying myself taking what little bits I can off the records." I never, ever thought I'd be on a platform somewhere, playing. I think soul-searching is the thing they've got to do, really, to find out what it is they want to tell the world. And not try to take shortcuts by jumping and getting images and clothes, like they do in England. They've still got these no-talent types who somehow instinctively know they look good onstage, so they sort of skip that 50 volumes of homework. They don't harden themselves. They really should get this sort of culture going, and have fun in clubs, like we used to.

Vaughan: I ended up dressing up in my room. I'd be playing so loud, and I'd have the record player up so loud that I wouldn't hear my dad come in, and he'd kick me across the room.

Beck: I'm curious to know what the current attitude of parents is to youth trying to get into a rock band. I can almost hear the conversation over the garden fence: "Hey our son is joining a rock band." Whereas, in our time it was like, "Oh my God, I'm sorry your son is playing an electric guitar. How awful!" It's success and money—which is the same thing they're trying to do with a suit and tie on. Isn't it funny that that's the thing that was frowned upon as a subversive activity—like the famous clip of the guy in the '50s smashing the record and saying, "We're not going to play any more rock and roll. This is finished! The last rock and roll record." What an idiot [*laughs*]. I mean, music is much more powerful than anything *he* ever stood for. As long as we keep a bit of the magic and the glory going in music, the job's done. *—Originally published in the February 1990 issue of* Guitar Player

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MANY PATHS TO THE HEART

The Making of In Step

By Joe Gore and Matt Resnicoff

Your playing on In Step seems less caught up in showmanship than in the past.

That came about from remembering simpler days playing in barbeque places in Lubbock, Texas, and remembering how good it felt to play naturally—just to play guitar. In the band I was in at the time, we had about five different singers. I can't really say there was no ego deal—we were *all* trying to lead the band [*laughs*]—but everybody was having fun backing each other up, and it just seemed to be a simpler time. This record was also more of a band effort than the others. It wasn't us trying to whip each other into shape like we used to—it was more like us working together to see what we could come up with, because we care about each other. And that's more real, anyway.

"Tightrope" has elements of funk, R&B, and blues. Do you find yourself trying to put new twists on the blues by bringing in different rhythmic options, or are you trying to incorporate different styles, as well?

Sometimes those things are thought out, and sometimes they're not. "Tightrope" is actually more like going back and remembering just playing boogaloos. All the rhythm and blues bands around Texas used to play rock and roll songs, and we played dunta-duntihs—which are shuffles. Then, we'd play slow blues, and then we'd play slow blues, and then we'd play boogaloos. On "Tightrope," instead of having the boogaloo rhythm part only on the hi-hat, Chris [*Layton, Double Trouble drummer*] plays it on his hi-hat and his snare.

There's a Duck Dunn feel to the bass.

Tommy [*Shannon, Double Trouble bassist*] has been working on different styles for a while. He used to play with a pick all the time, and his sound and style have changed quite a bit from when he was playing with Johnny Winter, and when we first got together. Now he has been working with his fingers. He really got into Willie Weeks for a long time, and Willie's just killin', you know? I think a lot of the inspiration for different things we're doing came from the *Donnie Hathaway Live* album. That has always been one of my favorite records.

Some of the other stuff is Memphis-influenced, such as "Crossfire," which has a Booker T. feel built around a real simple and direct riff.

Tommy came up with the bass riff, and Reese Wynans [*keyboardist*] came up with the keyboard parts. As soon as I heard it, I knew it was a real cool thing. It sounded like a Junior Walker song to me, and I hadn't heard anybody write anything like that in a long time. I had more problems deciding what I wanted to play more than anybody else. For a while, I was doubling the riff, and there was a rhythm part that fits real well, except that it worked better when there were two guitarists playing it. When I tried to play it by myself, it seemed like there was a hole when I stopped playing the riff with them because the dynamic was just so big.

"Wall Of Denial" is a unique approach to a 6/8 shuffle.

That's all I was trying to do—find a different way to do it. After I found the riff that starts off the song, I started working out a rhythm part, and I sat down with Chris on two drumsticks and a phone book, and Tommy on bass—some of our favorite stuff comes up on phone books [*laughs*]—and I just tried to find what felt good. I had the musical idea and a few verses, and then Doyle Bramhall came around and helped me finish off the lyrics. We've been jamming that thing for a while. I'm not sure exactly how it first came up. We'd be in the middle of this song or that song, and if the speed was right, I'd kind of get this wild look in my eye, turn around and look at Chris, and, man, we'd go.

For that tune, your onstage tone changes drastically when you switch on the Leslie. When you compose, do you see certain guitar sounds as implying certain mood shifts?

I felt that's the way that song should sound—even without an amp. I was trying to get that real clear, fat sound. In the studio, we kept trying to find it, and I ended up redoing that part. I put the old track in my headphones on the left, and sat there and played the whole song through. We ended up keeping it. Usually, I have a hard time overdubbing things like that, because if I go into the studio and play a solo I like but need to fix, I couldn't play that solo again if it killed me. Usually, whatever I played that time was just how it came out then, and if I tried to play it again, it sounds like I'm copying myself. I'm really not interested in that. There are certain songs, like "Crossfire," where sometimes it feels real good to play basically what I played, but I guess that's if you get real close to what you wanted in the first place.

Did you compose the solos and closing fills in "Crossfire" as themes?

No, that's how they came out at that time. For this record, we took more time to work. We went ahead and kicked out the idea that if you play it more than three times, you're wanking. We would play it a couple or three times, and if it wasn't clicking, we'd stop and figure out why—whether it was one person's or the whole band's approach, or if we couldn't hear each other right, or we hadn't eaten yet, or whatever it was. No telling. We would take the time to find out how to make a great record. And if it was obvious that it wasn't going to happen that day, we'd just do something else and come back to it.

You get lucky sometimes. During the soundcheck at Madison Square Garden, the problems you were having with your tone seemed to work themselves out almost magically.

Amps die [*laughs*]. They get sick and die. I don't know what it is, but it seems like tuning to E♭ destroys amps. It may have to do with frequencies within the tubes. My amps seem to develop extra-curricular tones—that *stink*! Usually, if an amp is going to hold up, I'll know it right off the bat. It'll sound fat

with a good, healthy bottom, and the midrange will be smooth—not a honky kind of sound. I guess I've been afraid of being white all my life [*laughs*]. In the high end, I like different things, but, mainly, I like it to be clean with just enough breakup that it doesn't sound like it's tinkling. On this kind of a workout schedule, I give most of my amps about two weeks to a month, and then they sound horrible. Part of it has to do with using the Ibanez Tube Screamers and stuff like that. It seems like the amps used to last longer.

Do you have the sound guy do different mixes for each room, or do you have a set blend of Marshall and Fender that you always use?

Lately, it has been day-by-day. For a long time—over a year or two, I guess—I just used two Vibroverbs and a Dumble with one cabinet. Moving into bigger halls—with the amps getting bounced around—they weren't holding up as well, so I started adding things. I'm trying to make up for what's wrong with one amp by using another, as well. Now, I'm using four amps—plus another to push a Leslie. But I am still looking for one particular amp that does it all.

Why did you switch from Vibroverbs to Super Reverbs?

I'm using a Vibroverb to run the Leslie. I like the Vibroverbs, but by using two, I end up with 30 inches of speaker, as opposed to 40, and I hear the difference. There's a little more power there. What I hear from where I stand onstage depends on the day. But, for some reason, when an old Fender amp works right, it's still some of the sweetest tone I've ever found.

Are you using a Tube Screamer onstage?

Yeah, as well as an old Fuzz Face, an Octavia, and a wah-wah pedal. The Fuzz Face works sometimes [*laughs*]. Sometimes it dies. The Octavia sounds good when I use it with the Tube Screamer. More often than not, I hit the Tube Screamer, and it just sounds like I turned up. That's really what I'm looking for with those things.

What do you use for "Life Without You" on Soul to Soul? It sounds remarkably similar to Hendrix's "Axis: Bold As Love" tone.

The other night on stage, that was all three effects, with everything kind of stuck together. On the record, it was the Tube Screamer and wah-wah—actually, two wah-wahs. I put a piece of a rackmount plate on top of two wah-wahs, duct-taped it all together, and then found out you could stomp on one corner and switch on one of them, stomp on the other corner and get the other in there, or hit it right in the middle and they'd both kick in. Sometimes, you can leave them separate and just work them with both feet. You can set one in a certain place, and turn the other one on, and it doesn't even play the notes that you play. It plays harmonics in another place. I've tried doing it onstage, but it's real hard to control.

Your low-end sound on In Step is super-tight, but you still manage to get that razor-blade-through-the-speaker top end.

Throughout the whole session, I had at least three different setups going at the same time. We would have one old 4x10 Fender Bassman I bought that looked and sounded like they made it yesterday, and I left it set just as clean as I could possibly get it. Then, depending on what was working right that day, and what the song was, I would have a Super Reverb or a Vibroverb, or sometimes a Marshall set clean, and sometimes a Dumble. Every once in a while, we'd have this old Magnatone amp. There was also a Fender Harvard—which just barely works, but it barely works *right*. I'd have all these different amps lined up, miked different—not necessarily in separate rooms, although the Leslie was. When we got ready for a particular song, I would go through and get the best sound for what that amp could do, and then combine them all. With the Leslie, I used a Variac—a variable AC power regulator. A lot of times, for the slow sound, it would actually sound better if it was set on a fast speed with the power slowed down.

At what stage would you decide how to mix them?

I would hear it when we recorded it, and a lot of times during the mix, we would be looking for that same sound. We'd toy with it to bring the most out of it if we could, but it was pretty much already thought up. For the rhythm playing on the rock and roll songs, the main thing we were trying to do was get the guitar and the whole band to sound as loud as they could without it sounding like we were covering each other up. I took Telecasters and Stratocasters, and I played mix-and-match with necks, bodies, and pickups. Rene Martinez [*SRV's guitar tech*] was great. I'd say, "Okay, try this neck on that body with those pickups," and, a few minutes later, he'd walk in with this thing and we'd try it out. Sometimes the necks wouldn't fit quite right, so we'd have them shimmed in there, but if it worked, it worked.

Do you ride the volume pot much more when you record?

I'm doing that a little bit nowadays. What started getting me back into turning the guitar down some was remembering that it's actually clearer playing rhythm with the Fuzz Face on and the guitar turned down, than it is with the Fuzz Face off and the guitar turned up. I can't always depend on this Fuzz Face. It's real old and beat-up, and if it gets in the sun, it's dead. I've had Roger Mayer build me a couple, but we've never gotten the chance to sit down together and talk about what I like and dislike about them.

Parts of Soul To Soul and In Step are complemented by organ work. Is the organ trio something you've thought about exploring?

Yeah, I've gone through phases of that—off and on—through the years. I've always really liked that kind of playing. In fact, I got a hold of a Gibson Johnny Smith guitar that I really like. But so far on record—except when I used the Johnny Smith on "Stan's Swang" [from *Couldn't Stand The Weather*]—it has always been one of the Stratocasters. "Riviera Paradise" and "Lenny" [from *Texas Flood*] are both played on the same guitar, and, for some reason, that guitar works for songs like that more than anything else.

It must have a special meaning to you.

It's called Lenny. I found it at a pawnshop, and I didn't have the money to buy it. But my wife and several other friends of mine put a pool together and bought the guitar. It has always meant a lot to me, and I love what it sounds like.

Is your playing different around the house than what your public knows you for? Like on the Johnny Smith?

Sometimes. When I play it right [*laughs*]. There are times when I pick it up, and I want to play "The House Is Rockin'" on it, and it just doesn't seem right, you know? I'm always trying to find a balance—in life in general, and in the music. You know, I used to feel like I needed to sing things *at* people—to play *at* people. Later on, when I was getting high all the time, I found I was *drinking* at people, and getting high at people. Now I'm learning how to deal with all those emotions. I think we're all probably really looking for peace of mind in those songs. Like in "Riviera Paradise"—there's a more gentle, peaceful place there if you look real closely.

What technique did you use to get those artificial harmonics on "Riviera Paradise"?

On one verse, I was picking behind the nut. Sometimes, I do it with part of my thumb and the pick. Jeff Beck can do it with just his fingernail, and he can do it at will! We're gonna have to beat him up and find out how he does that [*laughs*]. I end up using part of my thumb and the pick, picking from a different angle.

When you do your big, smooth slides down all the strings, which finger applies the most pressure?

All of them. I just saw Albert King do it. And also, when he sings, it sounds the same way—like when he goes, "Whooooo!" He just lays his big ol' hand on the neck and moves it down.

But you're using pretty tough strings.

I'm using a lighter setup right now because I've got a hole in my finger. Because of the schedule we've had, Rene hasn't had a chance to dress the very edges of my frets, and I just found yesterday that at the points where I play a lot, my calluses were getting ripped off to where it stuck a hole in my finger. Right now, I'm using a little bit lighter strings—but just until I get my calluses back.

So you've gone back to a .013 E?

Yeah. I like the sound of them—I really do—even though it's painful to use them. I used to use a .018.

On the high-E string!

Yeah. In a way it was insane, but I played a *lot* more simply, and what I chose to play was very to the point. I got out of that, and into using smaller strings and playing faster just looking for recognition I guess. Looking for flash. But using bigger strings and playing slower was my way of being able to be reserved. Of course, I couldn't see playing as many gigs as we're doing now like that. I don't think my hands would hold up. They're not holding up right now.

What did you have on the bottom—a .127?

[*Laughs.*] The biggest one I found so far was a .074. It has been years and years since I found them, and I just used them for a little bit because they ate tuning heads, but it was great. You'd hit an open *E*, and it sounded like the piano part on [Hendrix's] "Crosstown Traffic." Those things are fun, and I like that sound, but, then again, I don't think there are many amps that can take that for very long. Right now, I'm using [low to high] .058s to .012s.

You have an aggressive picking style on the higher strings.

This may not make sense to y'all, but guitars make more sense to me strung backwards. A lot of things I look for, I learned from watching Albert King play. I listened to his tone, and I realized he was playing with his thumb. I figure he's using the meat, and then the fingernail coming from the top. The closest I can get to that on the strings is coming from the bottom with my finger. That's the sound I'm looking for. There are all kinds of variations of it. There's real gentle and smooth, but you can get some grip on it. And that's part of the reason I like big strings, because you can attack 'em and they'll stay there. However, a lot of times I feel like I'm breaking out of jail—forget about finesse [*laughs*]. It's a constant struggle for balance.

Did you have to modify your approach when you expanded Double Trouble to a quartet?

Yeah, but I think I was ready to change. I've always liked to play in a trio—partially because of the challenge. But then, playing with a keyboard player or a horn player, or both, there's a different kind of freedom. There's more freedom to be able to sing, and that's something I'm working on. There's a lot of stuff we couldn't do without Reese, and some things I wouldn't really want to have him on. Certain songs don't work with keyboards. What I'm looking for from the piano player when I'm doing something like "Pride And Joy" is a cross between boogie-woogie piano and John Lee Hooker. That's where the [*sings main riff*] comes from. Then, I have the bass player play it backwards [*sings reverse line*]. You cross them, and it's like boogie-woogie piano. Put a chord in it with the in-between notes—basically hitting just open strings—and that's the John Lee Hooker part.

On tunes like "Wall Of Denial," Reese does organ stuff that sounds like guitar comping. It's similar to the scrapes you do on "Cold Shot" from Couldn't Stand The Weather.

A lot of times, I develop how to sing a song after we record it. Then, I try to sing and play what I did on the record, and I have to have two brains [*laughs*]. That's happened with "Couldn't Stand The Weather," "Tightrope," and "Wall Of Denial." I didn't sing the songs while I played the guitar parts, and I realized that just because I was thinking about the lyrics doesn't mean I'll play it the same way as if I were actually singing it. When we first started to tour after *Couldn't Stand The Weather* was made, I had to hire another guitar player to do rhythm parts. It's a corner that I back myself into. I'm not Jimi Hendrix. I can't play every rhythm part in the world, and than sing at the same time and act like nothing's wrong [*laughs*]. And do somersaults.

What about a relatively complex piece such as "Riviera Paradise"?

"Riviera Paradise" was one take. We tried to do it again another day, and it sounded like Muzak or something. I never thought we would play that song more than once in the studio, and when we tried it again, everybody sounded like they were just playing a bunch of notes. It sounded okay, but like it should have been in an elevator or something. Nobody except for me even considered that we were going to do that for a take. Everybody was getting ready, and I turned the lights off in my little isolation booth, and was determined that it was the one. Everybody played real well—which was funny, because Chris was tuning his drums while we were doing the cut, and Tommy was figuring out what he wanted to play. It just fell together.

Had you written it, or was it entirely improvised?

I started writing it in '84, and it went through all these different phases. The progression pretty much stayed the same the whole time. There was one stage where it had lyrics, and, at one stage, it was a continuation of another song. I guess what the song *meant* to me changed over time. The song is written really to anybody who suffers. I was looking for the willingness to make right the wrongs that I've done throughout my life, I guess, but mainly the time I was using drugs and people and myself.

Are you involved in a 12-Step Program?

Three years and one month. I wouldn't be alive without it.

Why would a person in such a fortunate position as you become an addict?

I got started a long time ago. I was probably born an alcoholic and an addict. A lot of us are. It's hereditary. Becoming a compulsive of any kind is a genetic thing, and it's very easy to develop a disease of addiction if you don't know when to stop, or if you're trying to keep up with—or impress—somebody. It's the rock and roll myth. Let's face it—it's everywhere. "It's cool to get high. If you're higher than somebody, then you must be cooler." It's the same old bullsh*t, and I believed it.

I grew up in the '60s, when that's what everybody did. For the first few years, I didn't really feel better, but I thought I was supposed to, and I thought I was more accepted if I did. So I floored it. And the more caught up in it I got, the more I started to believe it. By the early '70s or so, I didn't know how to do anything without it. Without the crutch, I didn't feel like I had the stamina or the coolness. The further we went, the more stressful it got, the more I thought I had to deliver, and the more I believed that I got it from dope and drinking. The real trap is, the more a person pulls off, there's no reason why a manager won't say, "Oh, if he can do *that*, let's do this one and this one." It got to where we were doing schedules nobody could do, and I wouldn't have enough right thinking going on to make it known that I didn't feel good about it. I would stuff those feelings, get mad, and then say, "Well, I guess that means I better do some more drugs." It got to where if I was awake, I was snorting or guzzling something, and it got to where if I had to get up in a few hours, that was my excuse not to go to bed. It's a sickness.

Is it getting easier?

Some. A few more brain cells are kicking in. That's something else that's funny. Well, actually, it's not necessarily all that funny. Some of the damage that was done during all the abuse time really pisses me off, because I didn't realize what I was doing. I didn't realize. Then, it was a joke. "Here goes a few more brain cells." And everybody laughs. But it really makes me mad when I consider all the damage I did. And the weird thing is, had I known what I was doing, I don't know whether it would have been enough to stop me. It took really hitting the bottom to give up the fight, and "Riviera Paradise" is a product of coming back. That's one thing that stayed constant—that song was always meant to soothe feelings and pain. And that's the same thing "Lenny" was written for. I guess that's what music is really for in the first place. Whether it excites you, or makes you go through something—painful or not—the end result should still soothe in some way. *— Originally published in the February 1990 issue of* Guitar Player

WORLDS APART

Engineer Richard Mullen on Recording Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Johnson

By Andy Ellis and Jas Obrecht

Richard Mullen, the engineer of choice for Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Johnson, is an expert at getting world-class guitar tones onto tape. Mullen was engineering guitar parts on Christopher Cross's *Another Page* when he got the call to engineer and co-produce Stevie Ray Vaughan's *Texas Flood*. He worked on all of Vaughan's subsequent releases, with the exception of *Live Alive*, as well as Eric Johnson's *Ah Via Musicom* and *Venus Isle*.

How did Stevie Ray's recording approach compare to Eric's?

They're completely different. Ninety-Eight percent of Stevie's records were done straight live. Eric tries to get stuff live, but more times than not he's not happy with it, so he ends up going into overdub mode, and we piece things together until he's happy with it.

Stevie was relatively fearless in the studio. He was a real performer in the sense that he didn't really think too much about the technical things. Once he got out there and started playing, he was just enveloped in the music. You could see that when he played live, and he wasn't any different in the studio. If he was into it, you'd see him do his little dance steps all over the studio—just like he was playing for 10,000 people. There was hardly any overdubbing at all—except on the jazzy guitar part of "Stang's Swang," where he was using a different kind of rig. Other than that, just about the only overdubs were vocals and an occasional rhythm part over a lead. The basic guitar parts on the studio records were all done live. And they were almost always judged on Stevie's performance. If someone in the band made a bonk, but Stevie played great, we'd say, "Well, that's it. Let's just go with that." My first record with Stevie, *Texas Flood*, only took us two hours to record.

You're kidding.

That's all we did on that record. It was basically him playing his live set two times straight through. We got in the studio, we set it up, and I said, "Just play it like a gig." They went through about 12 songs, took a break, and a half-hour later, they did the whole set again. We basically chose the best of the two cuts, and that was the first record. I laugh when I think back to when I was working on Stevie's *In Step*, which was a much more difficult record for him to do because he didn't really have a game plan. That was also the only time we ever put a set of headphones on Stevie, and he was very uncomfortable with them. On top of that, Stevie didn't have the songs prepared, so it took us three or four months to make the album. I can remember saying at the end of it, "God, I don't ever want be involved in anything that takes this long again."

How did you hook up with Stevie?

In his earlier years, Stevie was pretty tough to listen to. His guitar tone was shrill, and to make it worse, he always had terrible soundmen. I started helping him out at soundchecks, and that's where our relationship developed. I just really enjoyed listening to him live. Once I finally decided to get into engineering on a full-time basis, we started working together. As silly as it sounds, I was in the right place at the right time. More than anybody else I've ever met, Stevie was obviously just born with his talent. Eric is extremely talented, but he works very hard to be what he is, whereas Stevie didn't have to work that hard. Things would just come to him in the middle of a show, and he'd do something he never did before. He was just taken over by whatever force it was. It was amazing.

What was Stevie Ray's approach to miking amps?

I would just have Stevie play, and set the amps up myself. We never went through and dinked on the amps like Eric does. We were more like, "Well, this amp either works or it doesn't." There wasn't as much science in it—it was mic it with a 57, turn it on 10, and go. Stevie would usually use as many as three or four amps at the same time. He'd usually have four or five different Dumble Steel-String Singers, and six or seven Fender Vibroverbs. On every record, his sound came from a combination of the Fender and the Dumble amps—it wasn't specifically one or the other.

Did he like his amps miked close to the cone?

Yeah, we pretty much did all of Stevie's miking pretty close—within two or three inches from the cone, and usually a little off-center. We never did a lot of room miking. We'd usually just add effects afterwards to do whatever room sound we wanted.

What's the secret to recording a great distortion sound?

The guitarist has to be in a comfortable situation. In fact, the most difficult thing about recording guitar in general is taking the guitar player out of his element—which is usually live gigs where he's standing right next to an amp that's blowing out 118dB. Even when you pick a string lightly in that situation, it feels like it has a lot of power, and this makes you play a certain way.

The hardest thing I have to deal with in getting a distorted sound is

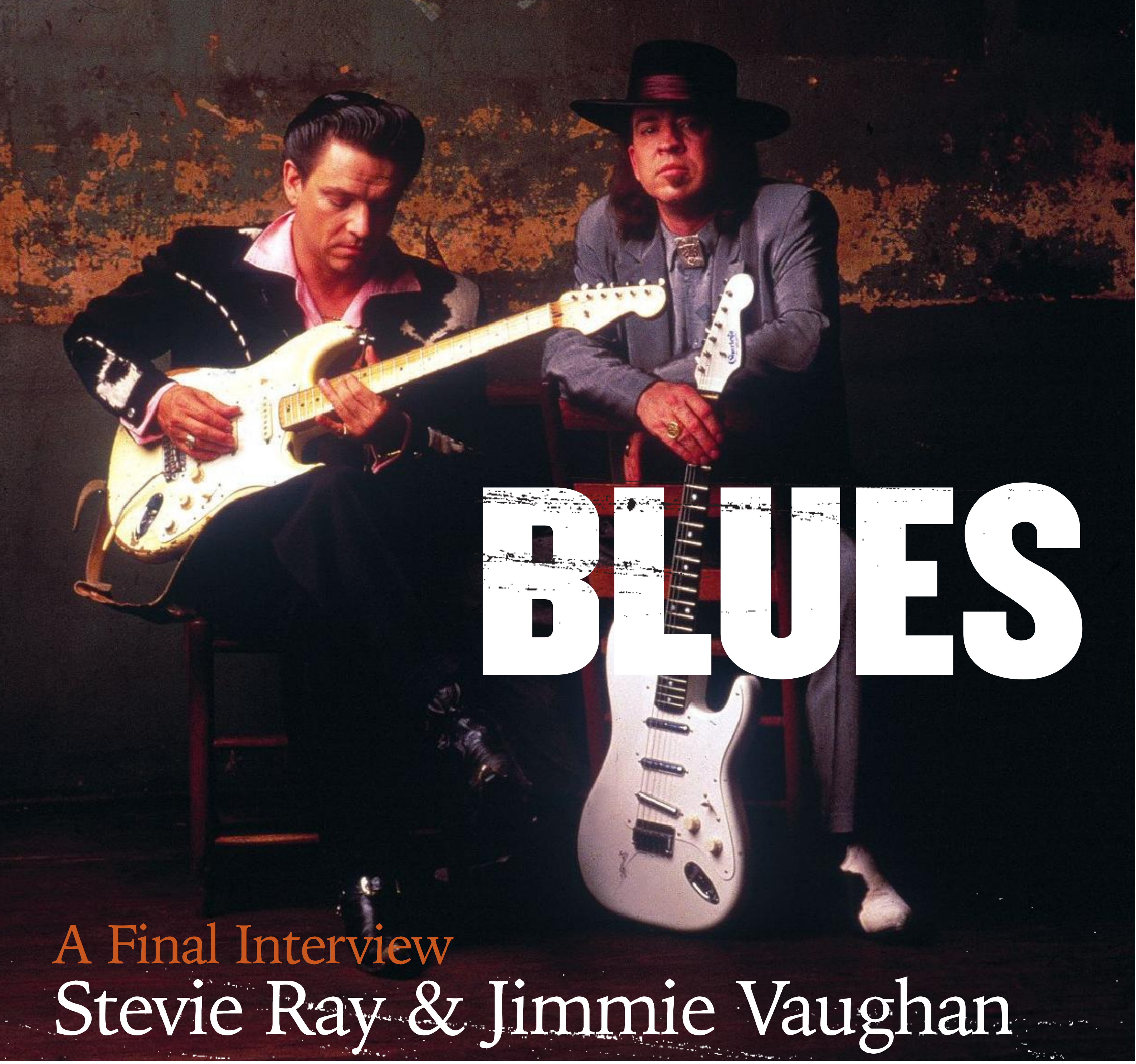
PHOTO: CLAYTON CALL

when the guitarist is isolated from his amp, and listening through headphones. When the sound doesn't have that bigness or power, what typically happens is you start overplaying, and as soon as you start digging into those guitar strings like there's no tomorrow, your tone goes away. Also, the amps start glitching and getting weird sounds you just don't want to hear. So when you are going for it, it's really important not to start banging down on the strings. If there's any way you can get near an amp, or have the guitar cranked loud enough in the control room to where you can feel that note, then your tone usually will be a lot better. In addition, the sound coming out of the amplifier and hitting the resonating string adds more tone.

With Eric, we ended up spending a lot of time overdubbing in the control room, but with the speakers up pretty loud to where the guitar responds. Sometimes, Eric would listen to the guitar when the playback volume was really low, and say, "It doesn't sound right. There's something wrong with the sound." Then, I'd turn it up to 10, and he'd say, "Oh, yeah—that's it!"

What are your views on equalization?

The best guitar tone is going to come without any equalization. The more you EQ, the more it's just not going to sound natural. If you can get the sound you want without having to mess with it—or at least not mess with it until you're mixing—you're going to get your best guitar tone. You don't want to place a mic in there, and then take 10dB off 3kHz and say, "Okay, now it sounds right." It's better to move the mic around until you find out what works the best. *—Originally published in the July 1996 issue of* Guitar Player.



BLUES

A Final Interview
Stevie Ray & Jimmie Vaughan

By Stephanie Chernikowski

According to Epic Records, Stevie Ray Vaughan gave his last three interviews on July 29, 1990. Stephanie Chernikowski, on a photo assignment for Details, *spoke to both brothers during her allotted time.*

"Coffee?"

Jimmie Vaughan is at the urn in the kitchenette of Skyway studios, pouring himself a cup.

"Want some?"

"Please," I accept.

He pours out a second cup and puts it on the table in front of me. We exchange amenities of where we met previously: "The Thunderbirds… the boat… the Staten Island Ferry." Jimmie leaves. Stevie comes in, pours himself a cup, and produces milk.

"Want some?"

"Please." Done. Similar amenities.

Both men function with the "anywhere I hang my hat is home" ease that comes with living in transit and having to produce under pressure. Home today is a studio in midtown Manhattan. Stevie Ray and Jimmie are preparing what bizzers refer to as an "Electronic Press Kit," the videotape post-literate equivalent of the 8x10 glossies that usually accompany the release of an album. The brothers are taking five while the video crew breaks down and producer Nile Rodgers sets up to play them the latest revisions on a few tunes he has been fiddling with from the soon-to-be-released *Family Style* LP.

When the powers that be finally concede to send me into the studio to set up a few candid snaps, Stevie Ray and Nile are debating the tom-toms on a cut. After a few false starts, Nile finally lets her roll, and the boys settle in for a listen. It cooks. There's the requisite silence at the end, broken by Nile.

"I'm one happy puppy," he grins radiantly.

A few songs down the line, the brothers

break into a simultaneous round of finger-popping approval. Stevie Ray chews chocolate bars as we listen. Jimmie looks like he's biting the bullet. He paces a lot, smokes some. All three lapse into air guitar solos from time to time. The Vaughans trade chords. Nile solos. Everyone seems happy with the project.

It's the end of a long day. Stevie Ray balks when he learns he is supposed to do an interview. It seems nobody bothered to tell him. He is petulant, but agrees to do it, and he will later apologize for giving me a hard time. I'm not an experienced interviewer, and I stumble with my first questions.

"Just take them one at a time," says Stevie Ray.

That doesn't seem like the ideal way to go about it.

Jimmie: It's not, but it's real life sometimes.

Stevie Ray: Yeah.

Jimmie: Unfortunately, one of the bad things about being on tour a lot is we have to juggle relationships with our loved ones, and relationships with our careers. You don't have the time to take your time, and do everything the way you'd like to do it. That's just life, isn't it?

Well, it's life for those of us who are lucky enough to have too much to do.

Jimmie: Yeah, we're lucky to have too much to do.

I'd rather have too much...

Thank you. I feel privileged. Some things didn't sound like what I'd expect from you or Jimmie. It sounds like when the two of you got together, it created a new monster.

Stevie Ray: Exactly. You hit it right on the head. We didn't want to go by what we had done in the past. We had all these things—all these sounds and types of songs and beats and feelings we wanted to do that we've never been able to do with our own records before. So we saved them all up and said, "Okay, when we go in and do this, it's not going to be like anything else." To me, the only thing you can recognize on the record is our playing—the way we play or sing. But, otherwise, it's all new. Even the playing is new.

It came together different.

BROTHERS

My last memory of Stevie Ray Vaughan will be watching him climb alone into the backseat of his car, and seeing the back of his hat through the rear window disappear into the night.

I have a little sister, and I think it would be hard to work closely with her. Was it hard for you to work with each other?

Stevie Ray: No, that didn't really come up for me.

Jimmie: It was a welcome thing. It was a good excuse for us to get to hang out together—which we haven't done since we were kids, except backstage at some gig, or at some silly TV show, or passing through the same town by accident, or maybe one day at Christmas for a few minutes, or something like that. So we sort of used the time not just to make a record, but to visit with each other.

How did you work? Did you flip a coin and say, "Okay, Stevie Ray will do the leads this time"?

Jimmie: Whatever seemed to fit the best.

Stevie Ray: We took it step by step.

Did you write songs together?

Stevie Ray: We did some together, we did some separate, and we did some with other people. We did it all different ways. There was no set way to do it. We just did it. We were apart a lot during it, so we sent tapes back and forth.

Jimmie: That's what happens when we're on tour and trying to make a record at the same time.

Stevie Ray: Than nothin'.

What did you write first, the music or the words?

Stevie Ray: Sometimes the words, and sometimes the melody. Sometimes, I take five minutes, sometimes I take five years. Sometimes somebody tells you, "Hey, dumb ass—it's right *there*!"

How did you get together with Nile?

Stevie Ray: I had met him when I did three or four days of playing on that David Bowie album [*Let's Dance*]. I'd liked working with him then, and when I heard his name was in the deal for this album, I came straight up here to see him. That was the first time I'd seen him since I worked with him on Bowie's record.

I like what he brought to it.

Jimmie: Yeah, me too. He was perfect. It was meant to be. I can't imagine it any other way.

Stevie Ray: It was *mean* to be...

Jimmie: Let's not get too damn serious, because we're just trying to have fun.

The record has a different sound.

Stevie Ray: What you heard was not in sequence. It's not what's gonna be on the record. It was all mixed up. You heard it in bits and pieces thrown together in the wrong way. So you really have to wait to hear it when it comes out. Except for us and the producer, nobody has heard it but you. You looked at my painting before I finished.

Jimmie: Well, that's a compliment because that's what we wanted to do.

Let's talk about your styles. I've always heard Stevie Ray's playing is kind of like drinking tequila—extravagant and flamboyant—while Jimmie seems to have a drier sound.

Jimmie: What drink am I?

Dry Champagne.

Jimmie: Oh, yeah?

To my ear, it's a more restrained...

Stevie Ray: Let me ask you something. Do you like tequila?

I love both.

Stevie Ray: I just wondered. You might think, ugh, worms.

Is that an accurate analogy?

Stevie Ray: That's okay. I'll take that. But, sometimes, you have to pour some of the champagne into the tequila [*laughs*].

Jimmie: You might have a hangover, but it'll be fun while it's going.

Does it work? Do your styles mix well?

Jimmie: Yeah, absolutely. We have different styles in that we are different personalities. There are no two people alike. But, to me, we sound closer than most other people say, because I hear the same roots, a lot of the same tones, and the same stuff that we're coming from. As far as who's playing what lick and who's playing faster or that kind of stuff, it's like asking, "Do you like red, blue, or purple?" That's a hard question to ask us, unless we

start getting into licks—guitar licks, boring stuff like that. It's supposed to be for your ears. It's supposed to be what it makes you feel like. It doesn't matter about the technical bullsh*t.

I'm glad you said that, but I guess I should ask what kind of guitars do you play?

Stevie Ray: They're wood.

Jimmie: We play mostly Fender guitars and Fender amps, with a few oddballs thrown in here and there. But music to me is like, if I like it, it's good. If I don't like it, it ain't worth a sh*t. That's the way music is to most people.

A lot of great bands—the Everlys, the Allmans, the Nevilles—have blood in common. Do you think there's an extra...

Jimmie: When you get two people with, like you said, the same blood, there's something that goes together really nice. It flows. We can play together, and not have to talk about it too much. We know how the other person feels better than anyone else, so we can play together the same way, because that's the way we play. It's all emotional, and it's all feeling. There's some technical stuff in there, but we don't think about that. We quit thinking about that 20 years ago. If it feels good, that's what we like. If I feel good, I play good. If I feel bad, sometimes I play good. [*Stevie Ray laughs*]

Stevie Ray: And the technical stuff that goes on, I never knew a lot of it. I don't think either one of us really...

Jimmie: We never knew what it was called.

Stevie Ray: I don't know how to read music. A lot of songs I write, I have to ask somebody what key I'm in. That doesn't mean I don't know how it sounds.

I'm not a technical photographer or writer.

Jimmie: Then you take pictures and write from your heart about what you know, right? Well, that's the way we play.

Were there any moments when suddenly everything just came together?

Stevie Ray: I think so.

Jimmie: All of them. We kept working on it until we felt that it came together on all of them.

Where did things seem to come together best?

Stevie Ray: It's hard to say how that works, doing it the way we've done this record, which was sometimes apart at the time. It was not like a band going in to play a live track. Sometimes, it's not necessarily the most important part that pulls it together. It's just all of a sudden you realize it is *together*. A lot of times, that happens when you're listening back to something.

Jimmie: You keep rubbing on it till it feels good.

Stevie Ray: Yeah!

Jimmie: Making this record has been a great learning experience for me. I enjoyed it all the way around. It has been more than making a record.

Stevie Ray: I've been out in front with my band for a long time, and working with him on this—in some ways, it ended up feeling more like a band than being out in front with my own band. So it made me start thinking about learning again.

It took a lot of pressure off, which probably freed you.

Stevie Ray: Yeah.

Jimmie: It was an experiment. We kind of did this record family style. There you go...

In the past, Stevie Ray, you've told me that Jimmie was your hero and your main influence. Was it intimidating to work with him?

Stevie Ray: Of course [*laughs*]. Of course, it is.

Jimmie: I paid him a dollar to say that. I'll give you the dollar later when she's not looking.

Stevie Ray: Okay.

Is his credit good?

Stevie Ray: Yeah!

You can trust him?

Stevie Ray: Anytime.

Jimmie: He knows where I live.

—Originally published in the March 1991 issue of Guitar Player

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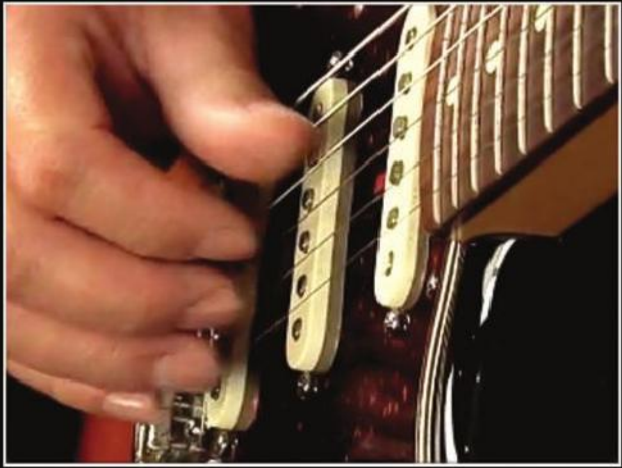

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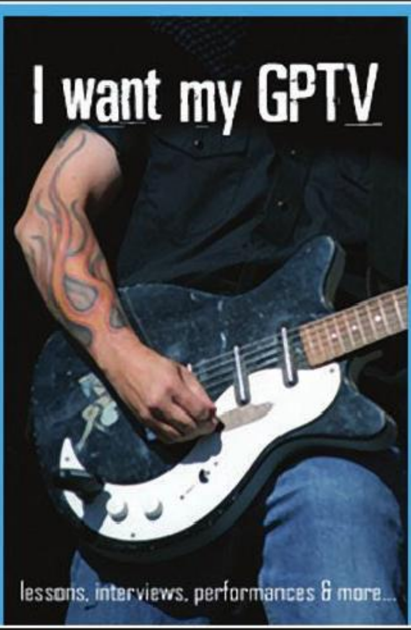

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RIVIERA PARADISE

TRANSCRIBED BY JESSE GRESS

The last song on *In Step* (Stevie Ray Vaughan's 1989 comeback album with Double Trouble), "Riviera Paradise" reflects the newfound sobriety and inner peace that SRV had struggled so hard to attain. Featuring the dreamy, bell-like Strat tones that made Vaughan's instrumental "Lenny" such a classic, this impromptu studio performance was composed and recorded on the fly, and concluded mere seconds before the tape ran out. "Riviera Paradise" brims with first-take magic and proves that intensity doesn't require volume.

Opening with six bars of rubato chord melody, Vaughan establishes the tempo and *E*-minor tonality at bar 7. Vaughan's voicings confirm his professed love for the great '60s jazz-organ trios. Instead of using a strong single-note melody to define the 12-bar head, he uses lush, chordal arpeggiations.

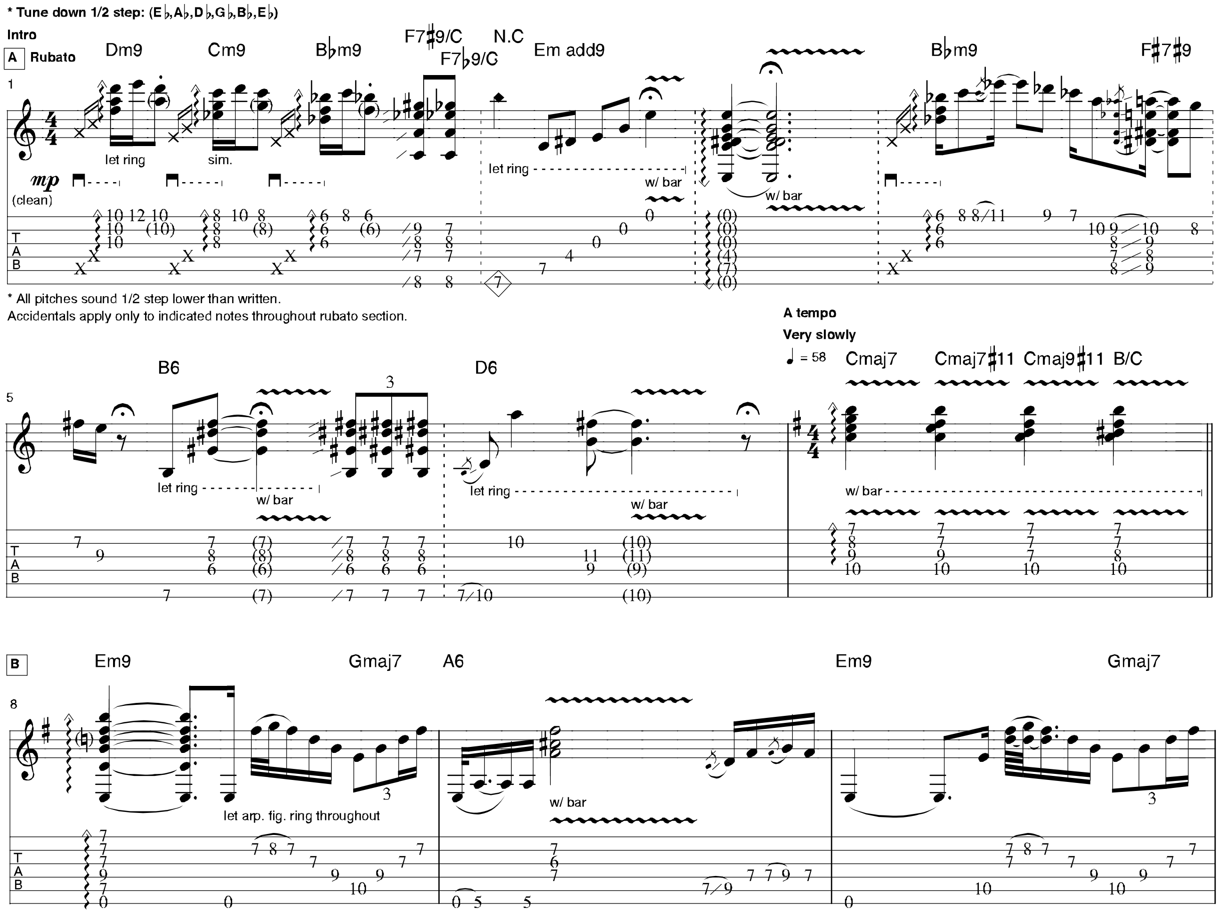
The solos start at rehearsal letter *C*, and Vaughan treats each 12-bar excursion differently. Working out of the twelfth position, he begins by conjuring smoky, Hammond-organ flavors.

If Vaughan sounds a bit lost on the *E♭maj7* that occurs nine bars into each solo cycle, it's because he plows through the change with *E* minor-pentatonic blues lines. This treatment generates some pungent dissonance, such as the ♯5 (B) in bar 28, and the ♭9 (E) in bar 112. Granted, this measure goes by quickly, and SRV's lines generate enough momentum to carry him through the progression. You can resolve this dilemma by simply moving up three frets and playing *G* minor-pentatonic blues patterns against the *E♭maj7*.

Letter F marks the beginning of a 24-bar piano solo. Here Vaughan lightly comps sustained chords, then hints at the swinging 16th-note syncopations that begin for real at letter G. Starting at letter H, SRV pays tribute to Wes Montgomery with bluesy, thumbed octave motifs.

The chimey trem-bar dives that follow letter I aren't harmonics. Vaughan pings his *G*-string behind the nut to produce the "secret D." (SRV didn't have string-trees on his Strat's *G* string, so the headstock portion was free to ring.) Be sure to keep your hands off the neck so all six strings can vibrate sympathetically. Don't worry about hitting other strings back there—the *G* will ring loudest.

At letter J, Vaughan steps on the gas with dense phrases reminiscent of over-the-top Hammond soloing. Don't be scared off by those complex rhythms. Slow down, subdivide each beat by two or three, and the rhythms will begin to make sense. Vaughan's subtle variations on the outro head (letter K) conclude nearly nine minutes of soothing, soulful inspiration. You can hear a fine live version of "Riviera Paradise" on Double Trouble's killer video *Live from Austin, Texas*. —*Originally published in the May 1999 issue of* Guitar Player



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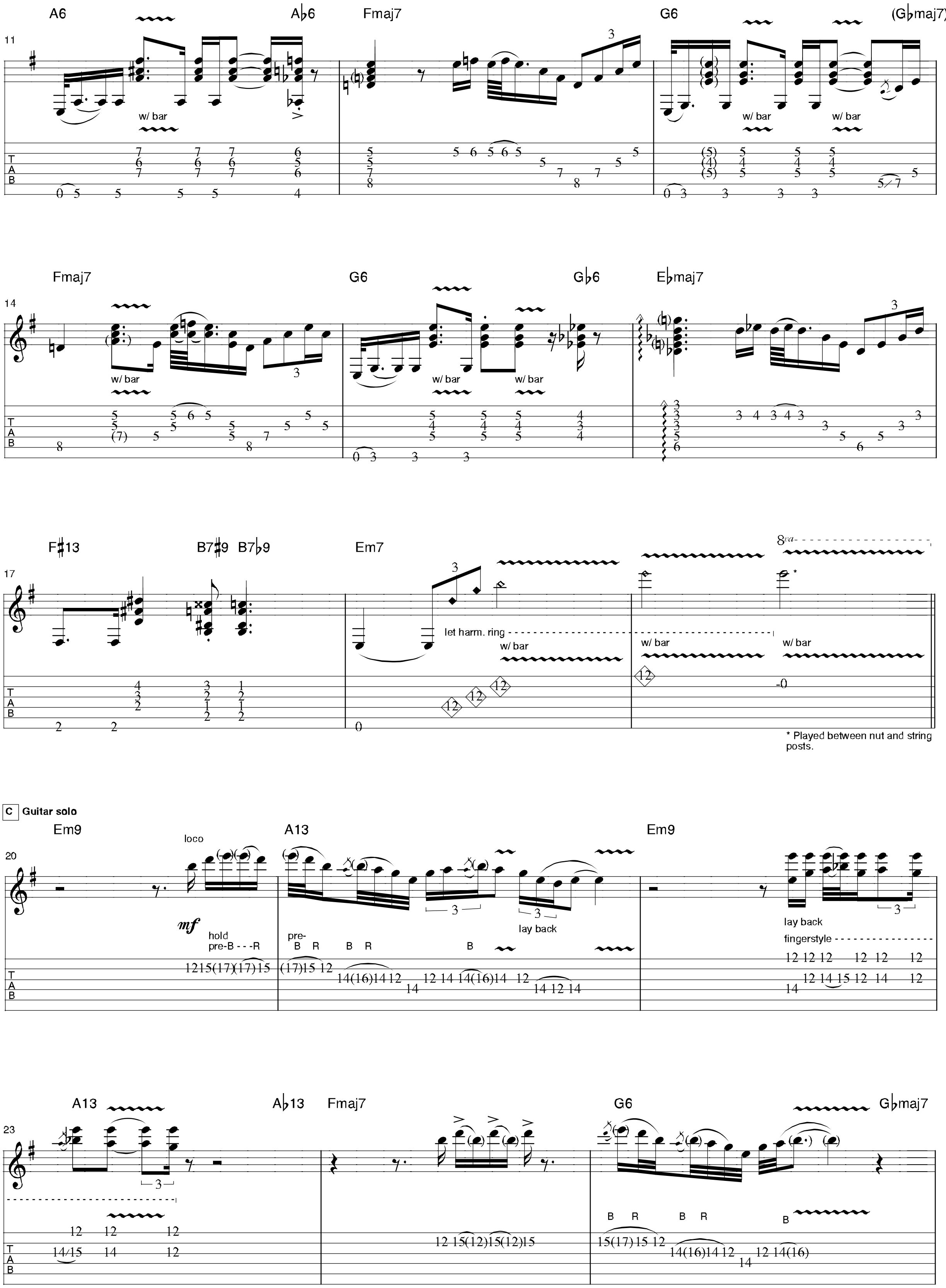
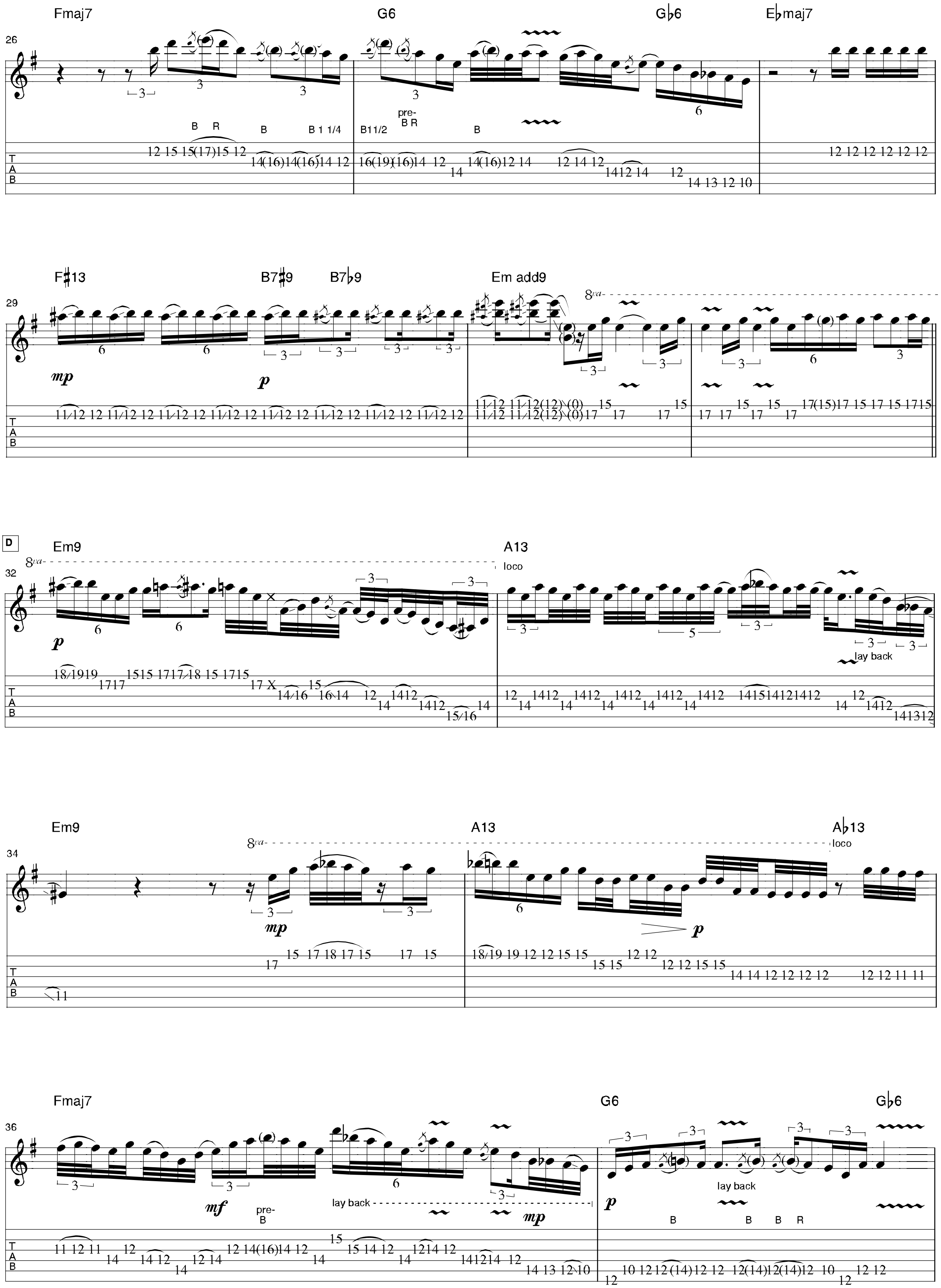
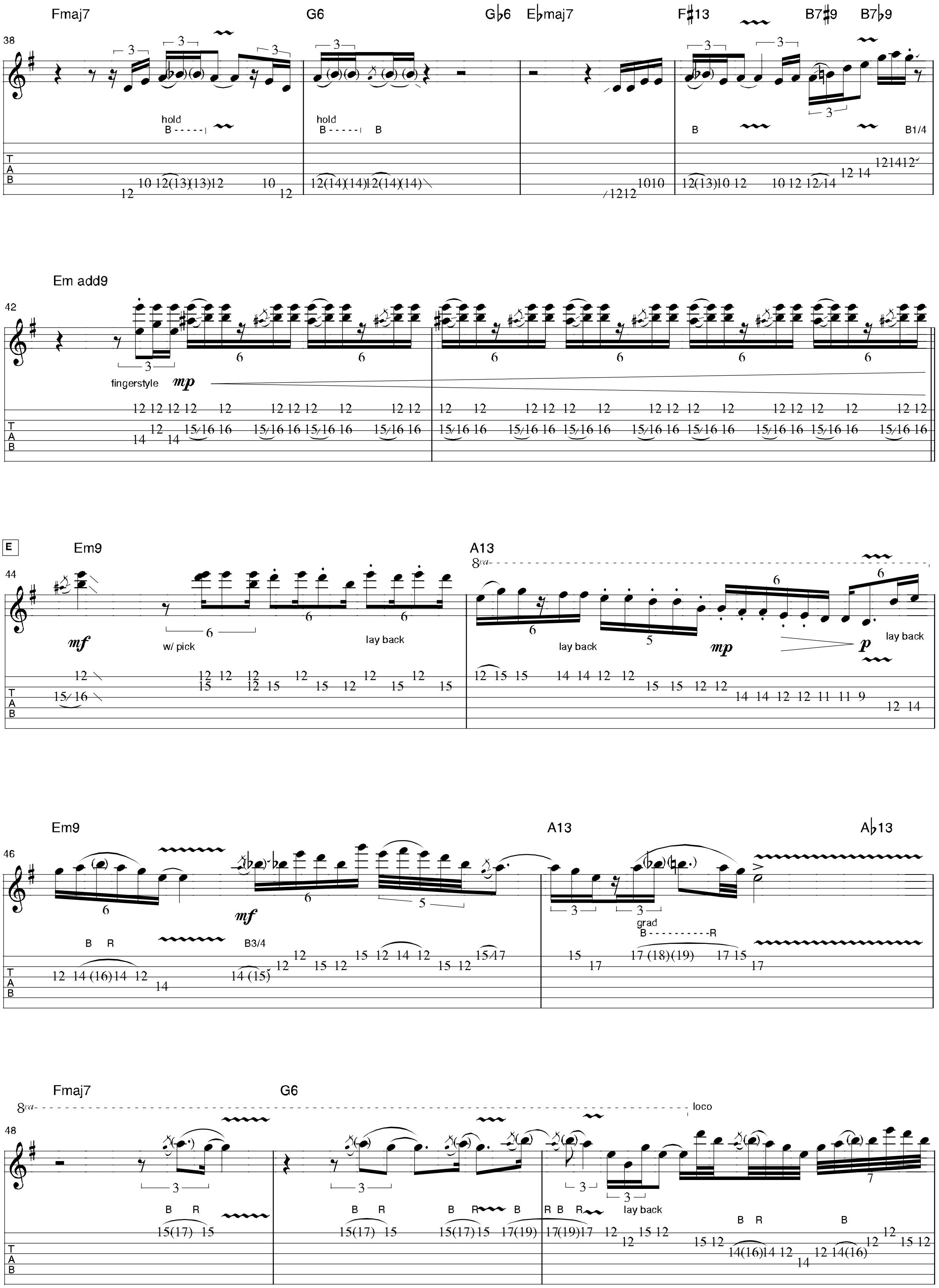
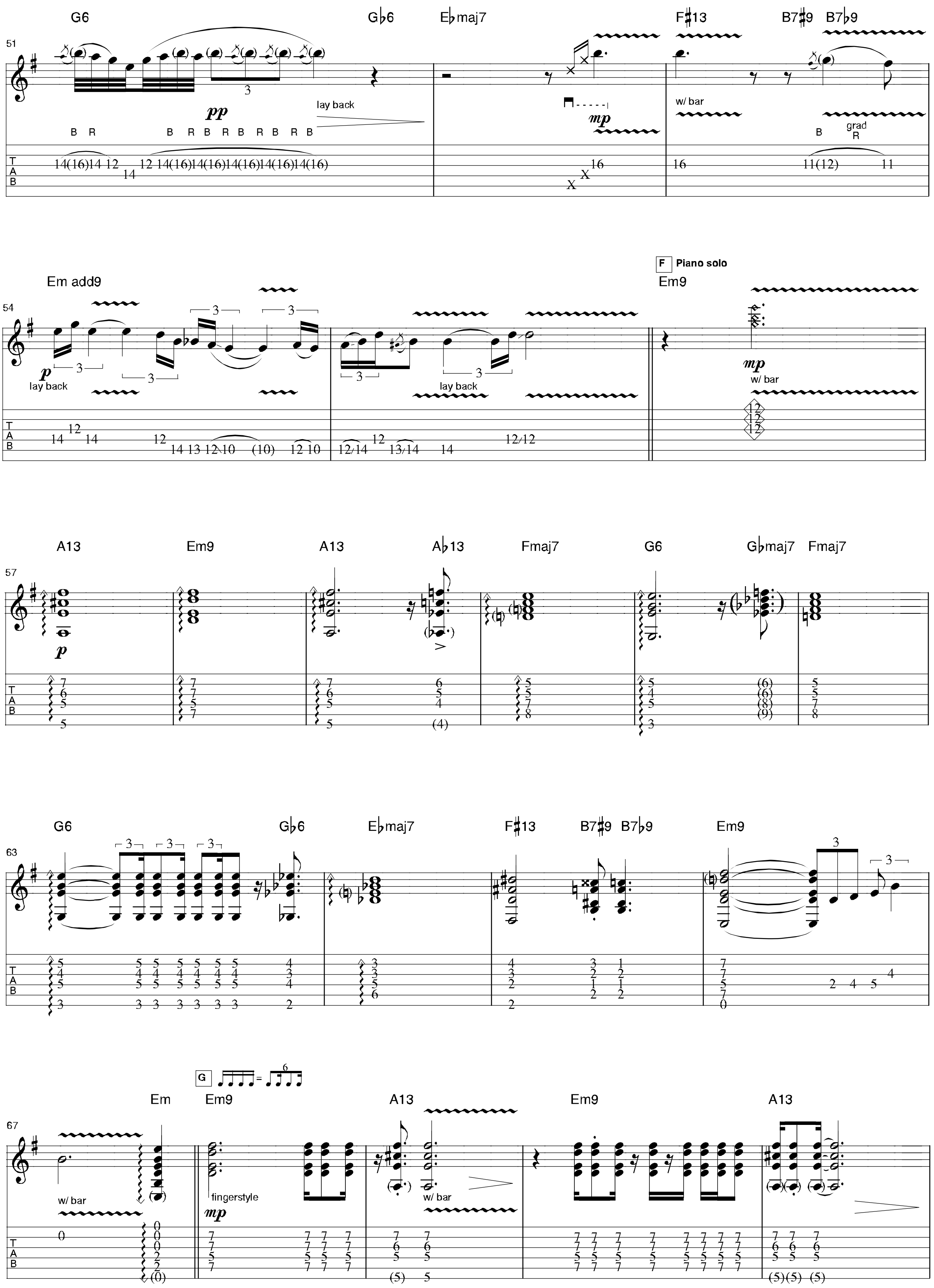
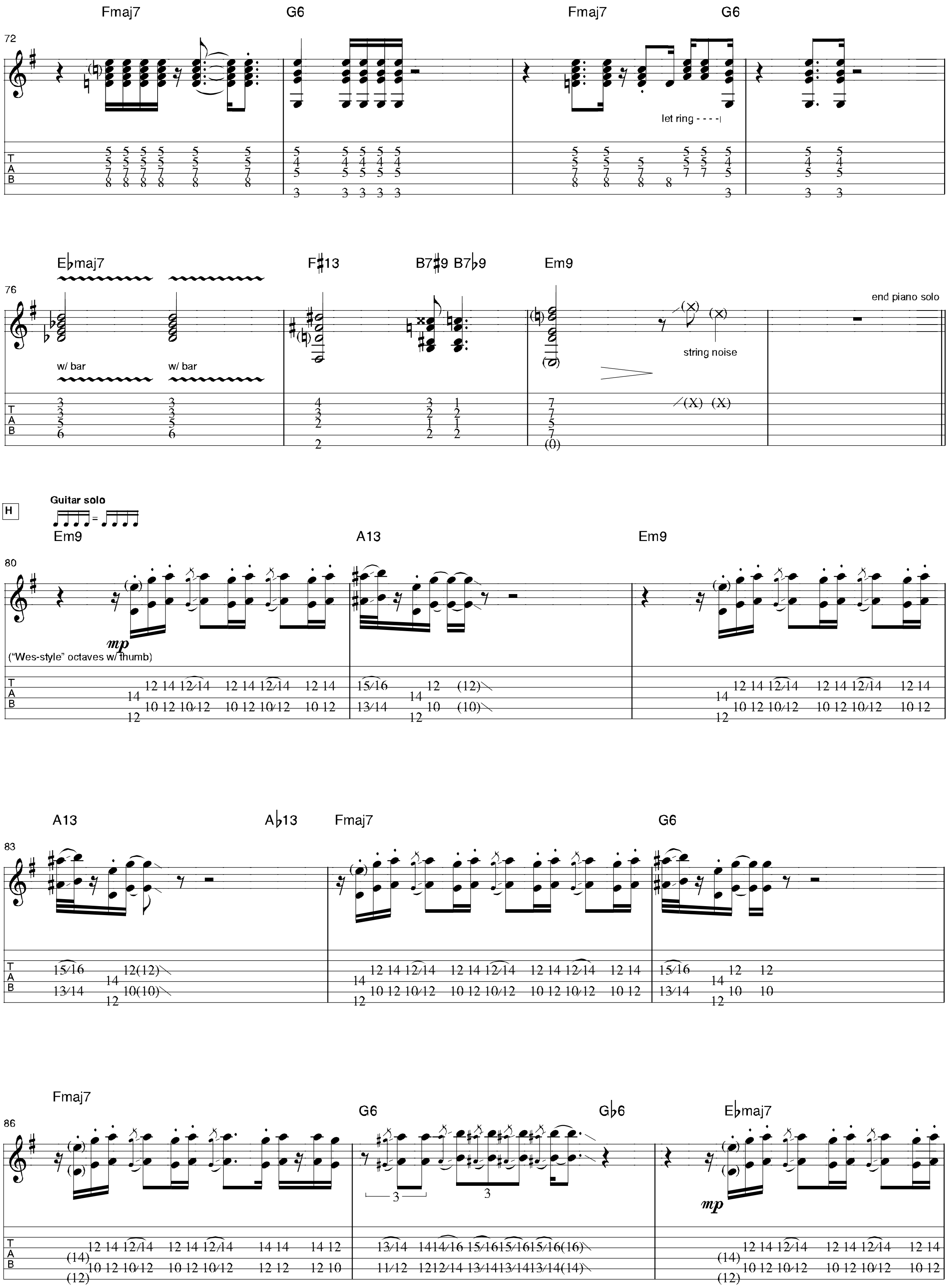
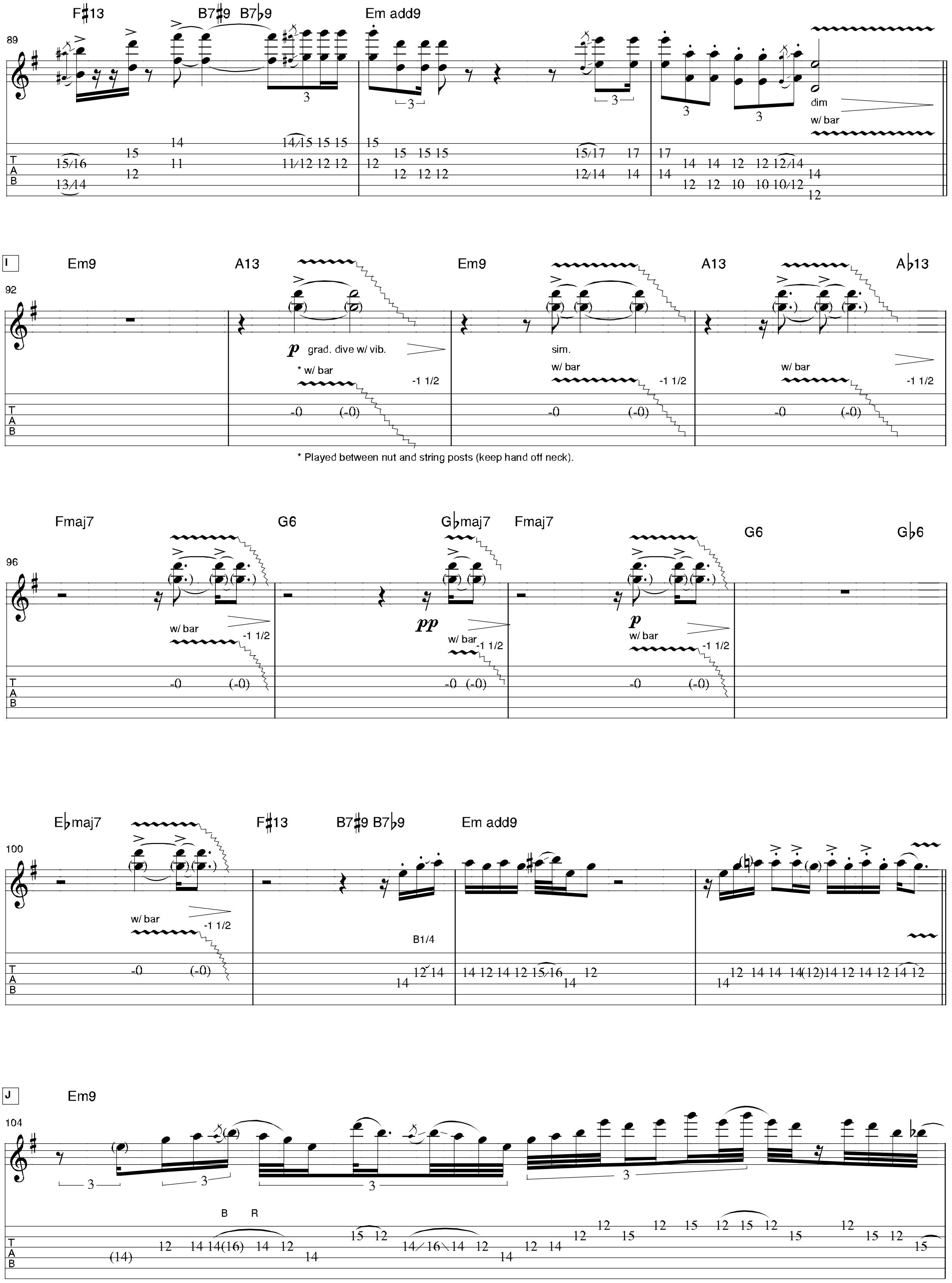

A6
A♭6
Fmaj7
G6
(G♭maj7)
w/ bar
Fmaj7
G6
G♭6
E♭maj7
w/ bar
F♯13
B7♯9
B7♭9
Em7
let harm. ring
w/ bar
8va
* Played between nut and string posts.
C Guitar solo
Em9
loco
mf
hold pre-B - - -R
A13
pre-B R
B R
B
lay back
Em9
lay back
fingerstyle
A13
A♭13
Fmaj7
G6
G♭maj7
B R
B


Fmaj7
G6
G♭6
E♭maj7
F♯13
B7♯9
B7♭9
Em add9
D
Em9
A13
loco
lay back
Em9
A13
A♭13
loco
Fmaj7
G6
G♭6
lay back
lay back

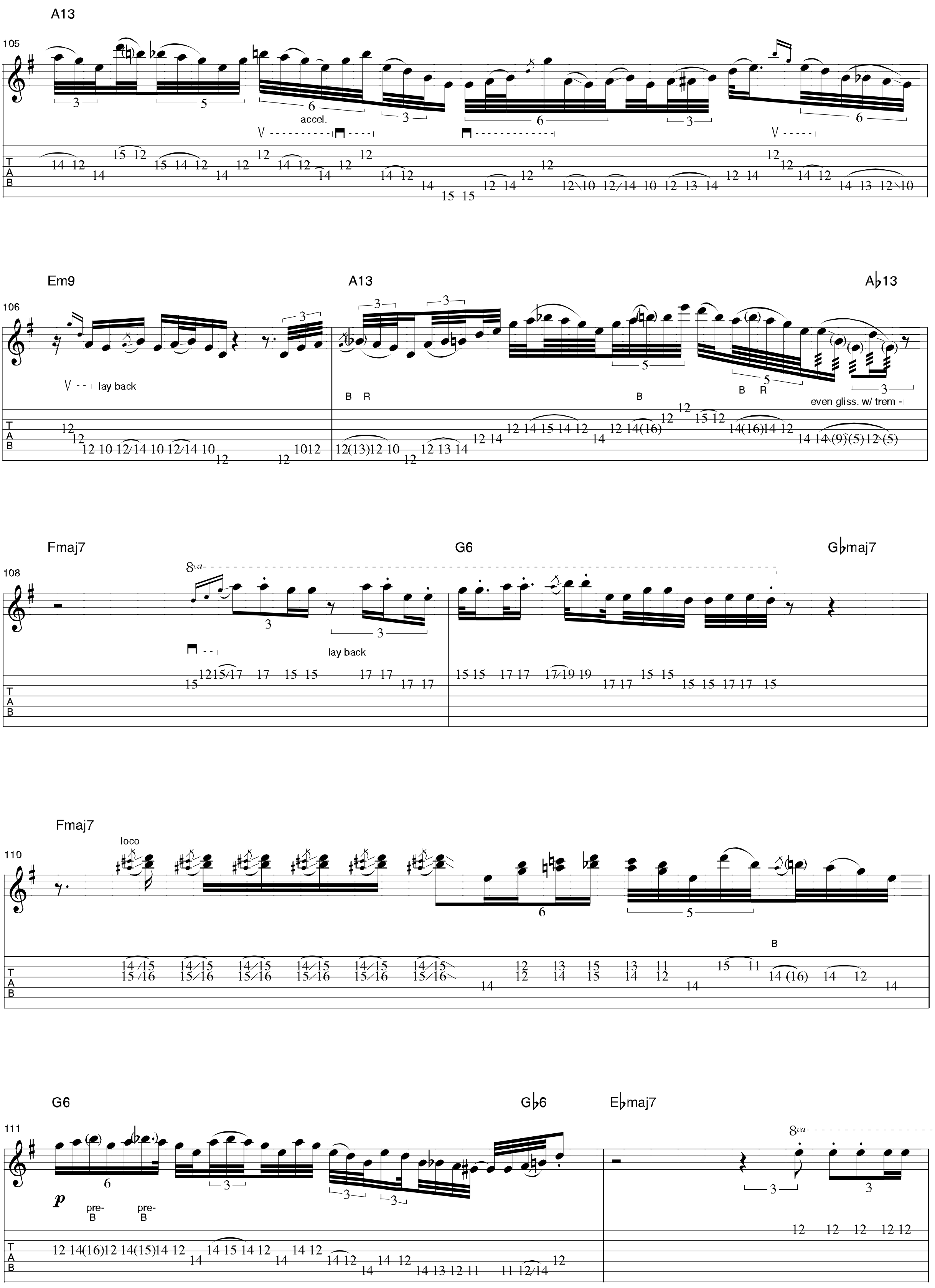

Fmaj7
G6
G♭6
E♭maj7
F♯13
B7♯9
B7♭9
hold
Em add9
fingerstyle
mp
E
Em9
A13
mf
w/ pick
lay back
p
grad
A♭13
loco

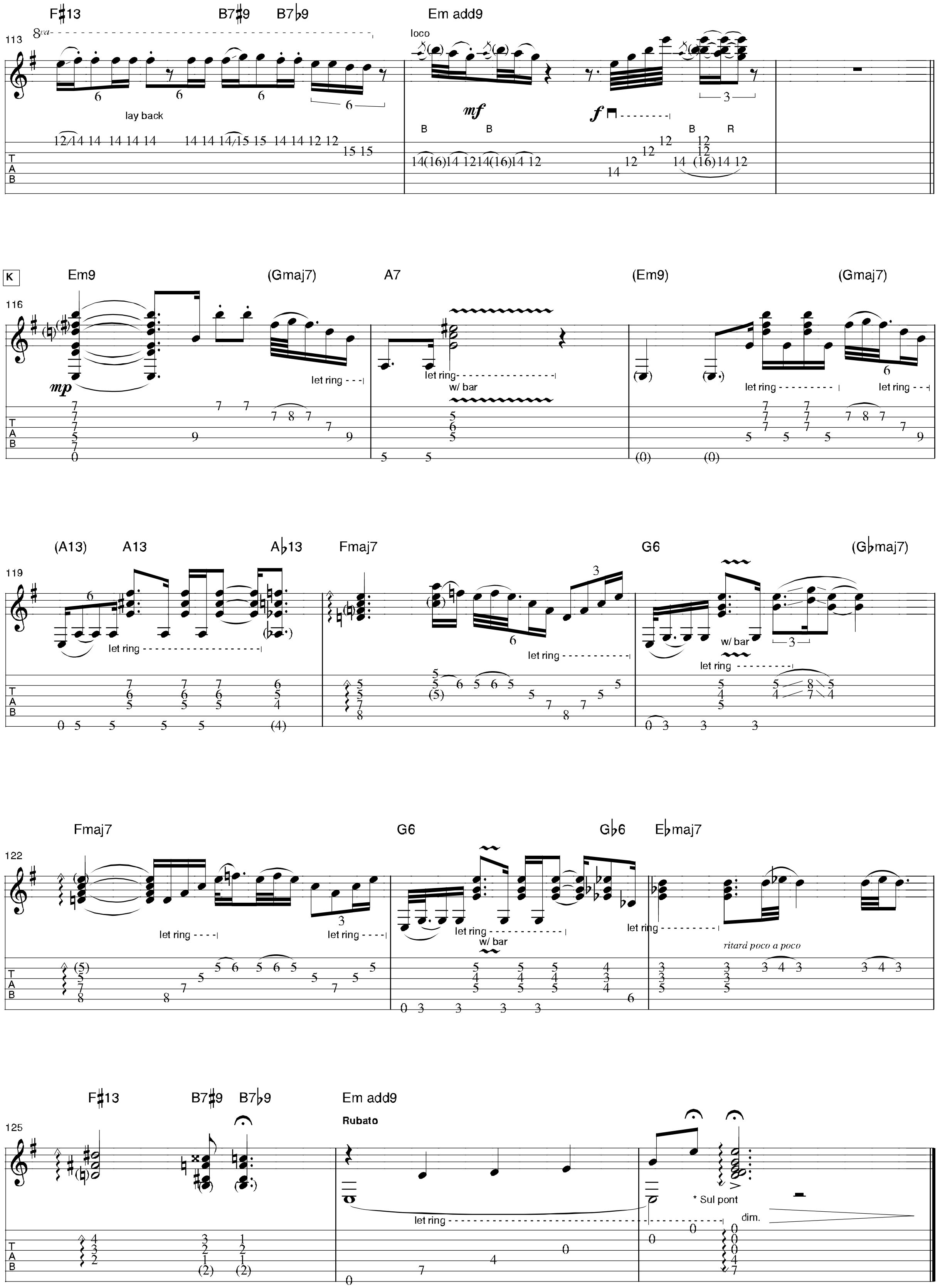

G6
G♭6
E♭maj7
F♯13
B7♯9 B7♭9
pp
lay back
mp
w/ bar
grad
Em add9
p
lay back
F Piano solo
Em9
mp
w/ bar
A13
Em9
A13
A♭13
Fmaj7
G6
G♭maj7 Fmaj7
p
G6
G♭6
E♭maj7
F♯13
B7♯9 B7♭9
Em9
Em
w/ bar
G
Em9
fingerstyle
mp
A13
w/ bar
Em9
A13


Fmaj7
G6
Fmaj7
G6
72
let ring
Ebmaj7
F#13
B7#9 B7b9
Em9
76
w/ bar
w/ bar
string noise
end piano solo
H
Guitar solo
Em9
A13
Em9
80
mp
("Wes-style" octaves w/ thumb)
A13
Ab13
Fmaj7
G6
83
Fmaj7
G6
Gb6
Ebmaj7
86
mp
T
A
B



* Played between nut and string posts (keep hand off neck).

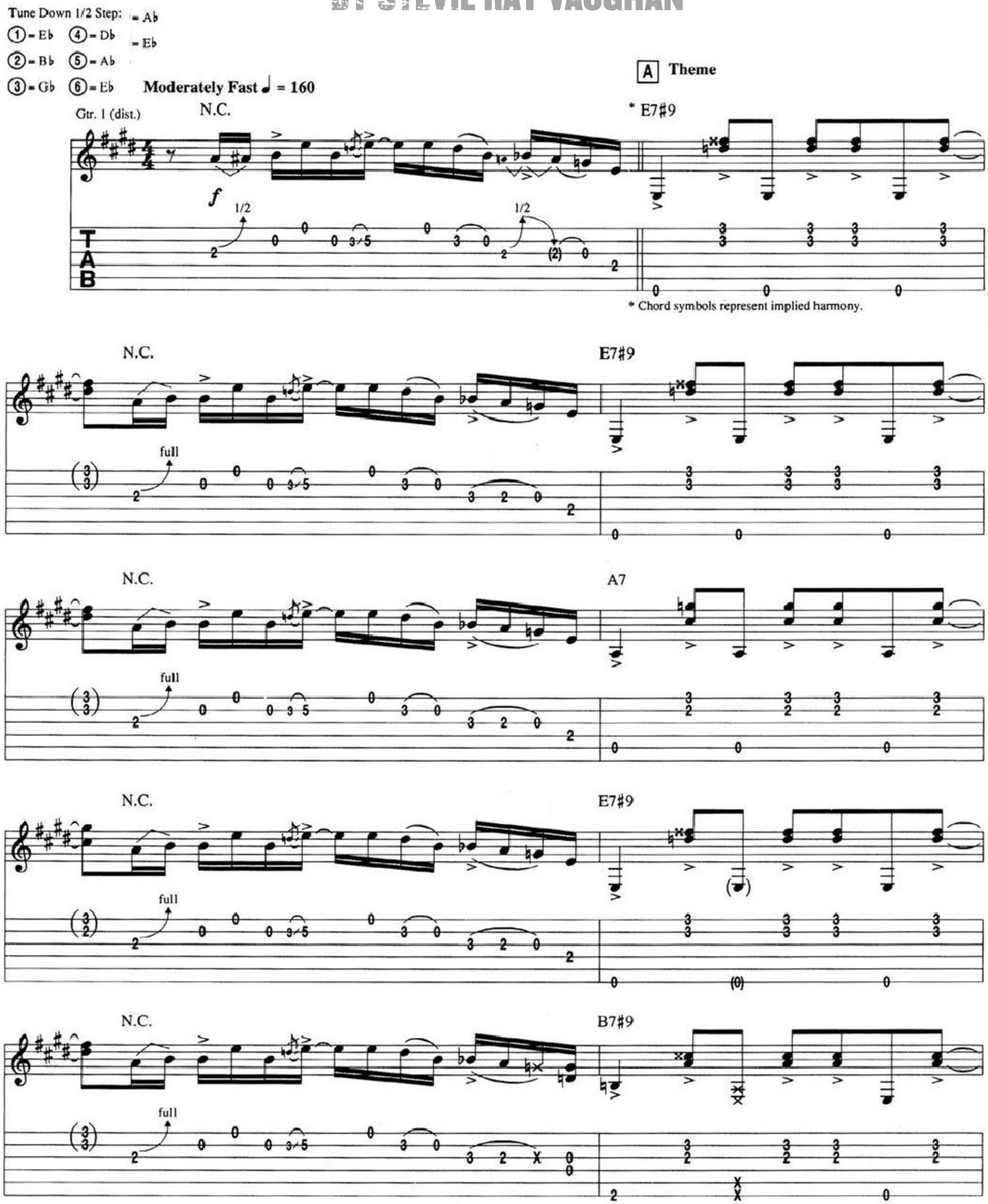

A13
105
accel.
Em9
106
lay back
A13
A♭13
even gliss. w/ trem
Fmaj7
108
lay back
G6
G♭maj7
Fmaj7
110
loco
G6
111
pre-B
pre-B
G♭6
E♭maj7



* Pick directly next to bridge.

SCUTTLE BUTTIN'

BY STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN



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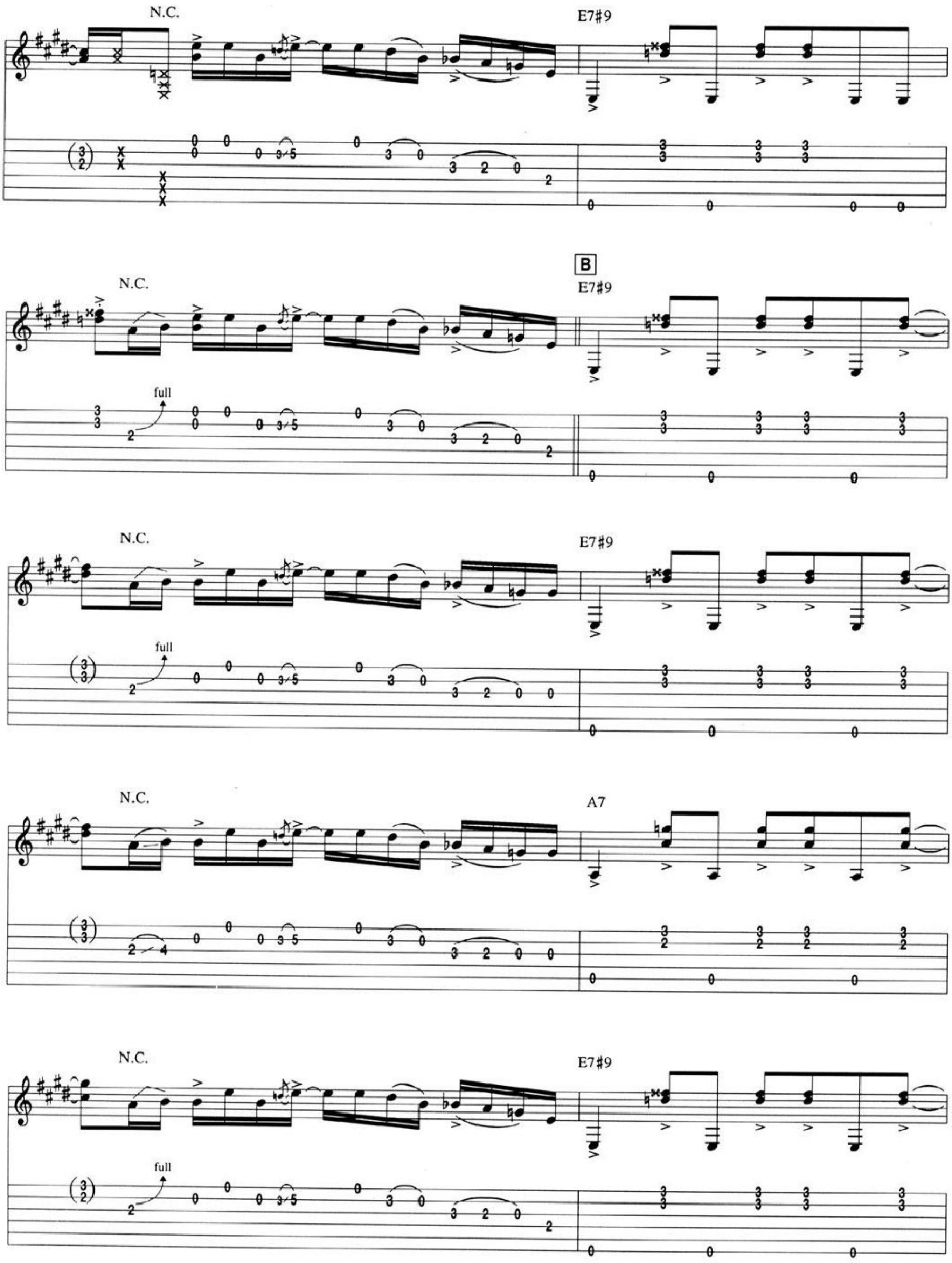
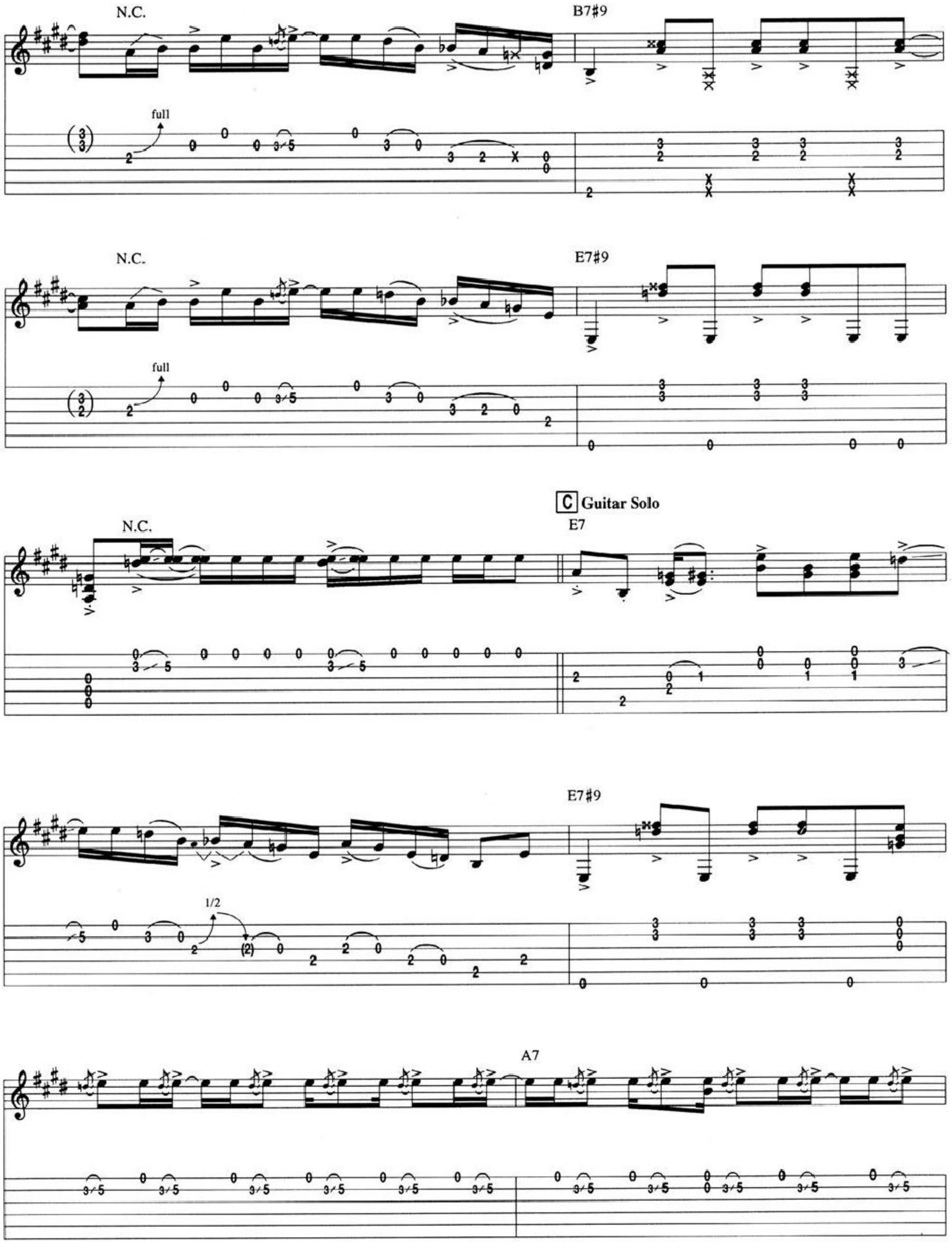
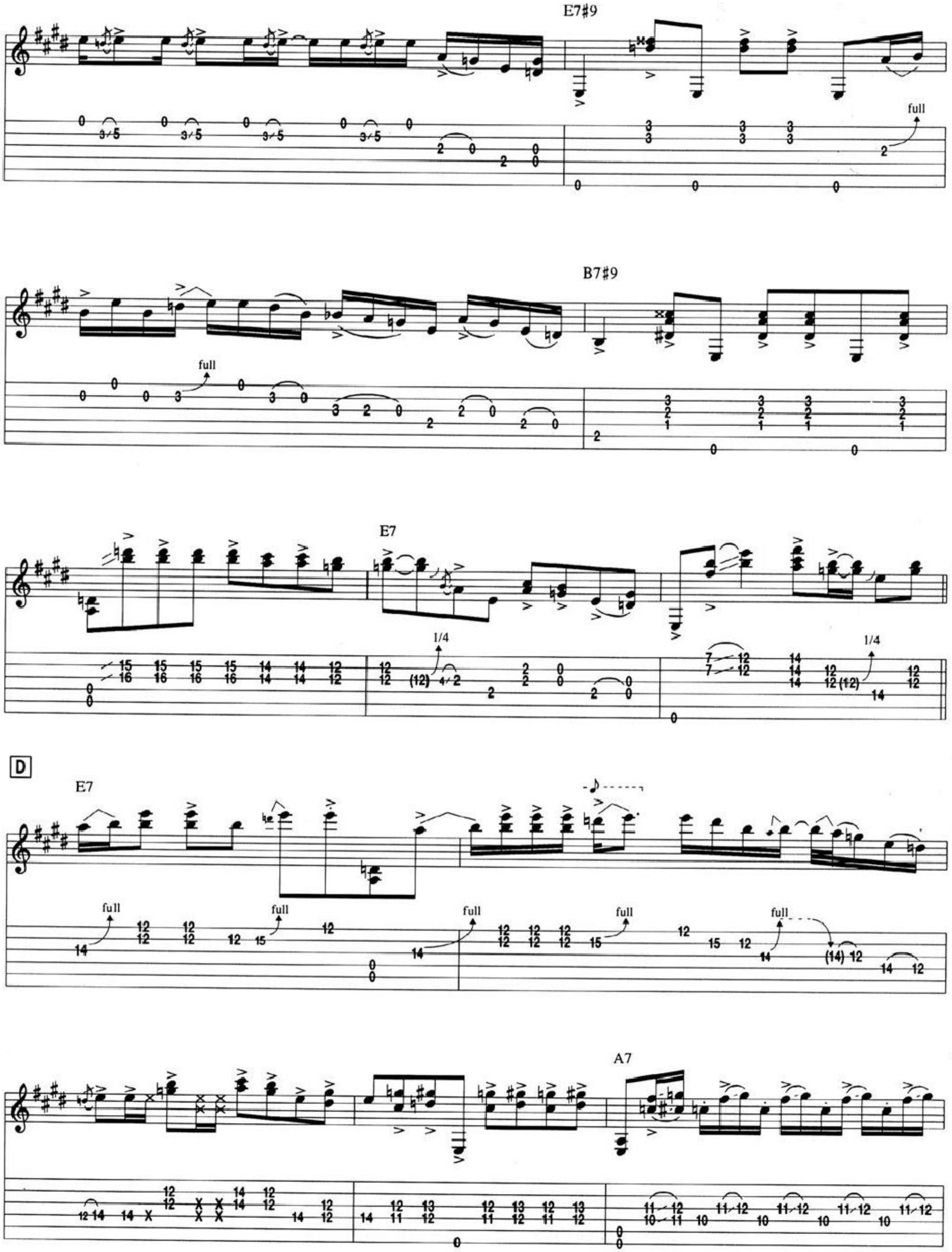
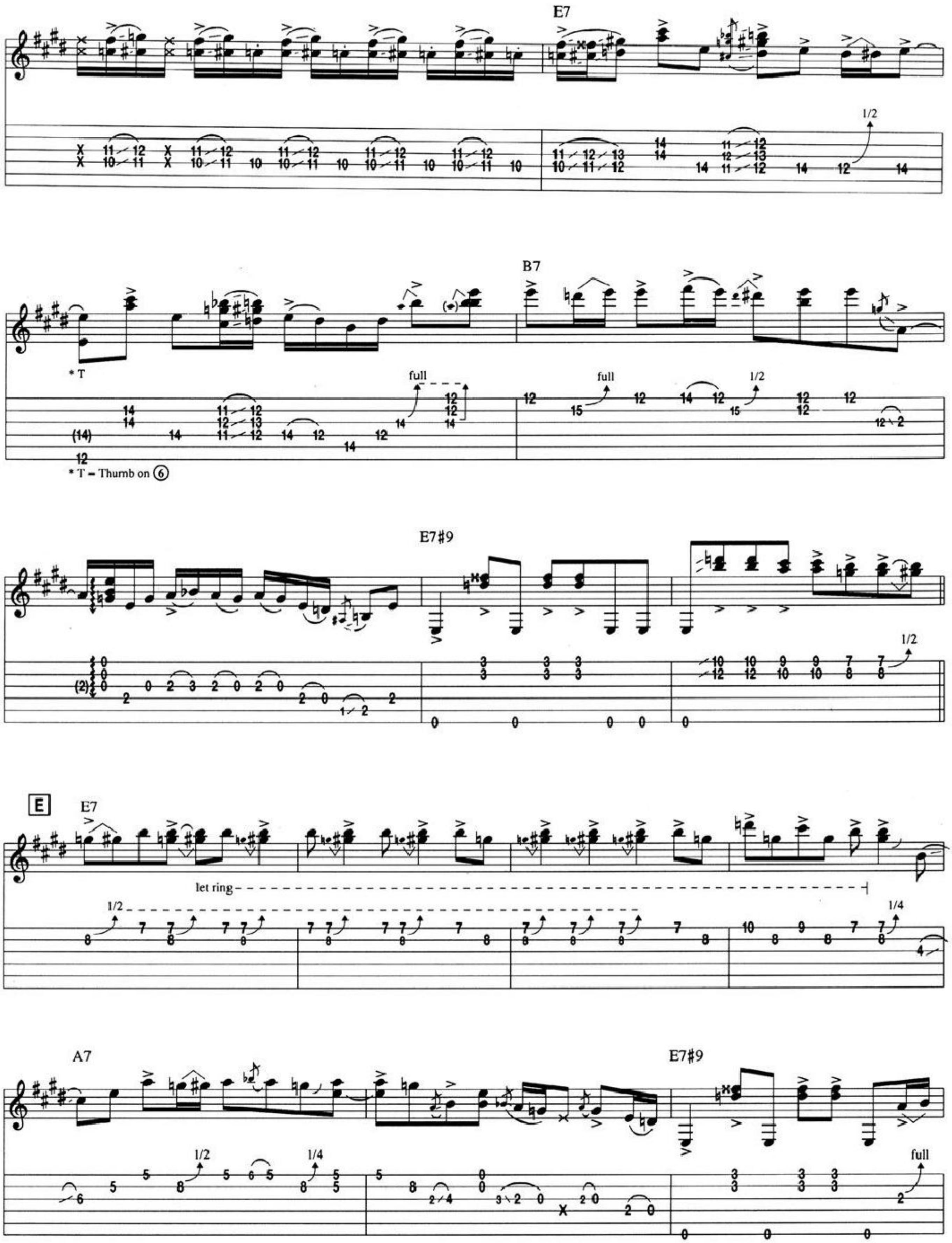
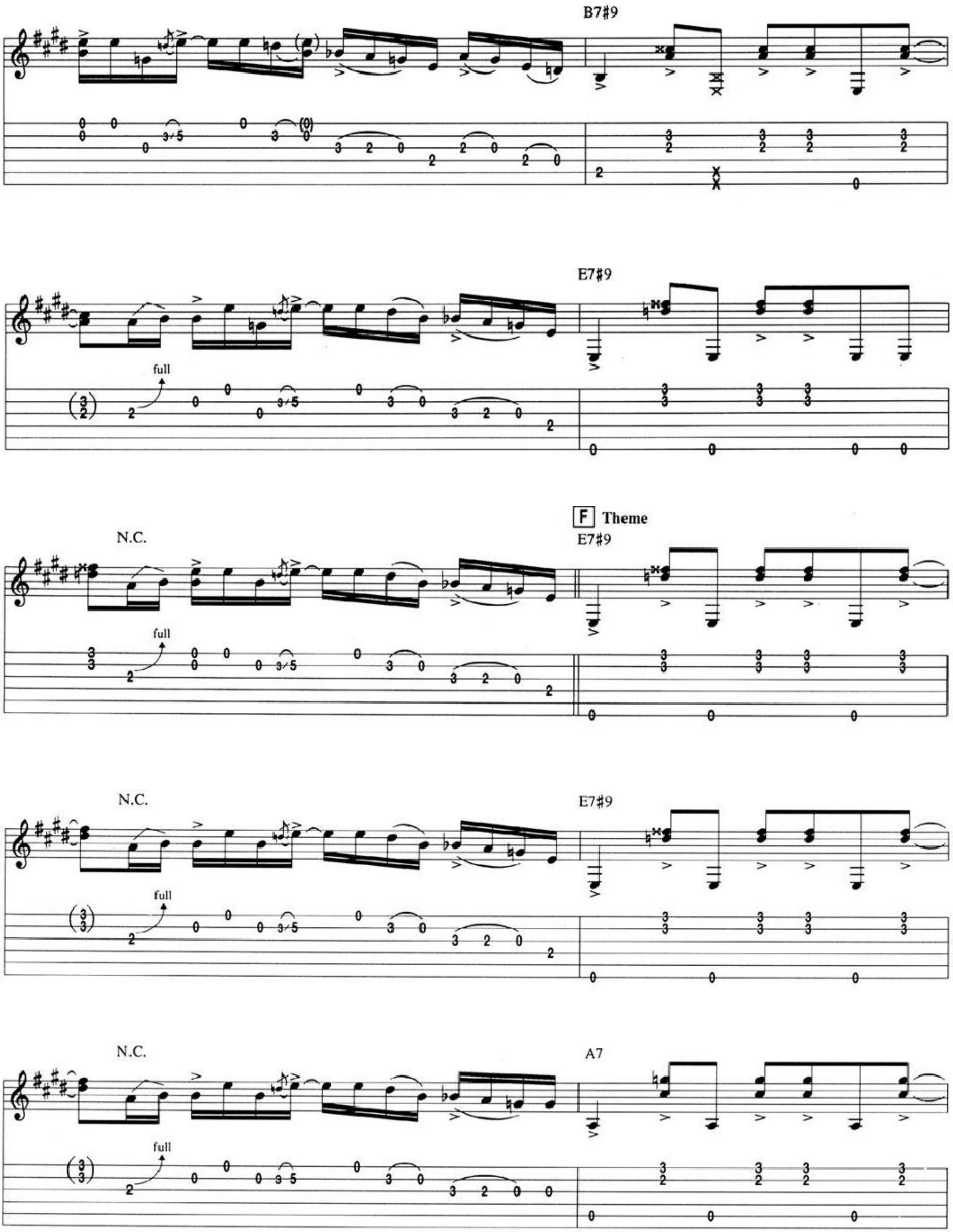
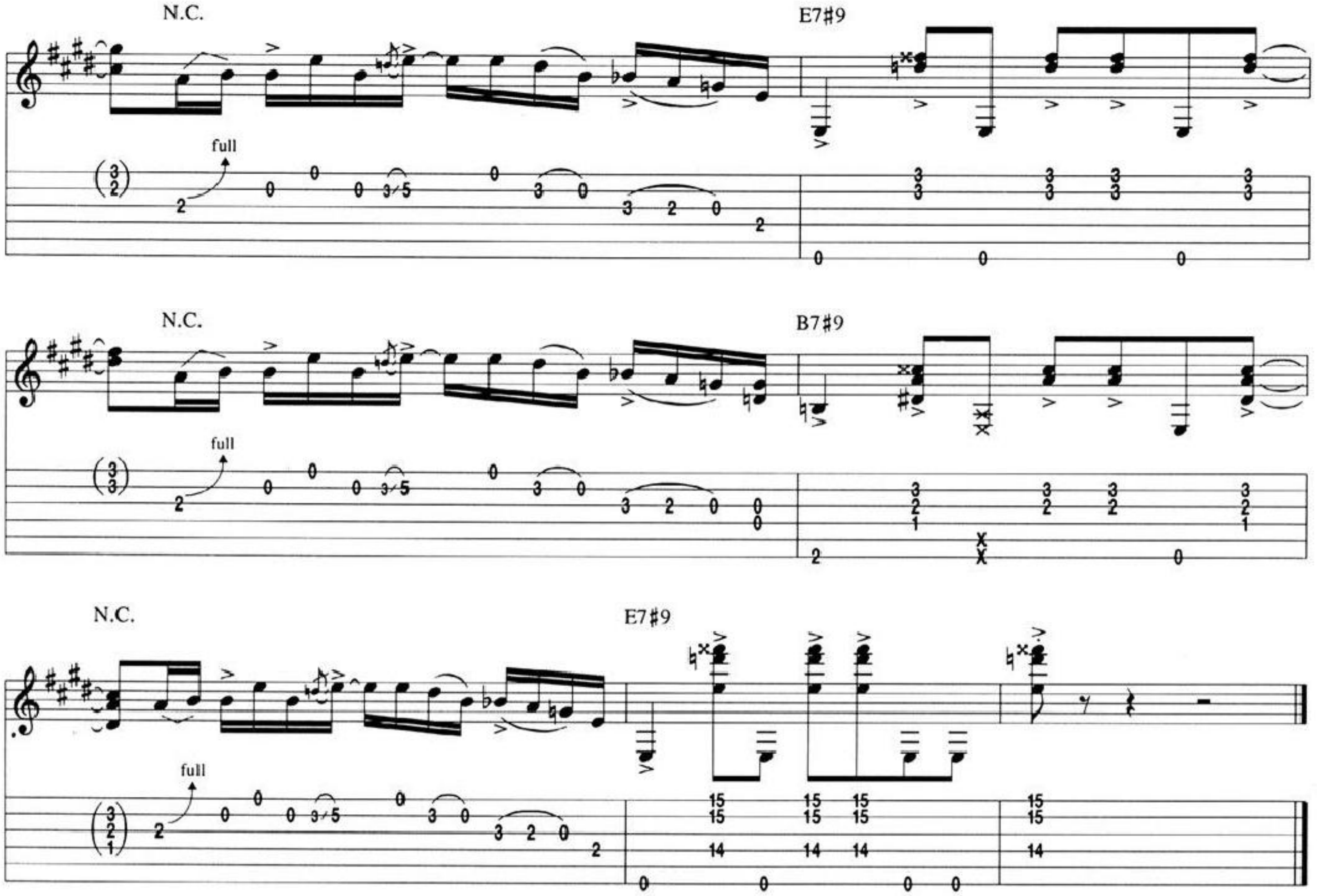

N.C.
E7#9
B
N.C.
full
E7#9
N.C.
full
E7#9
N.C.
A7
N.C.
full
E7#9


N.C.
B7#9
full
N.C.
E7#9
full
C Guitar Solo
N.C.
E7
E7#9
1/2
A7


E7#9
full
B7#9
full
E7
1/4
1/4
D
E7
full
full
full
full
full
A7


E7
1/2
B7
* T
full
full
1/2
* T = Thumb on ⑥
E7#9
1/2
E
E7
let ring
1/2
1/4
A7
1/2
1/4
E7#9
full


B7♯9
E7♯9
full
N.C.
F Theme
E7♯9
full
N.C.
E7♯9
full
N.C.
A7
full


N.C.
E7♯9
full
N.C.
B7♯9
full
N.C.
E7♯9
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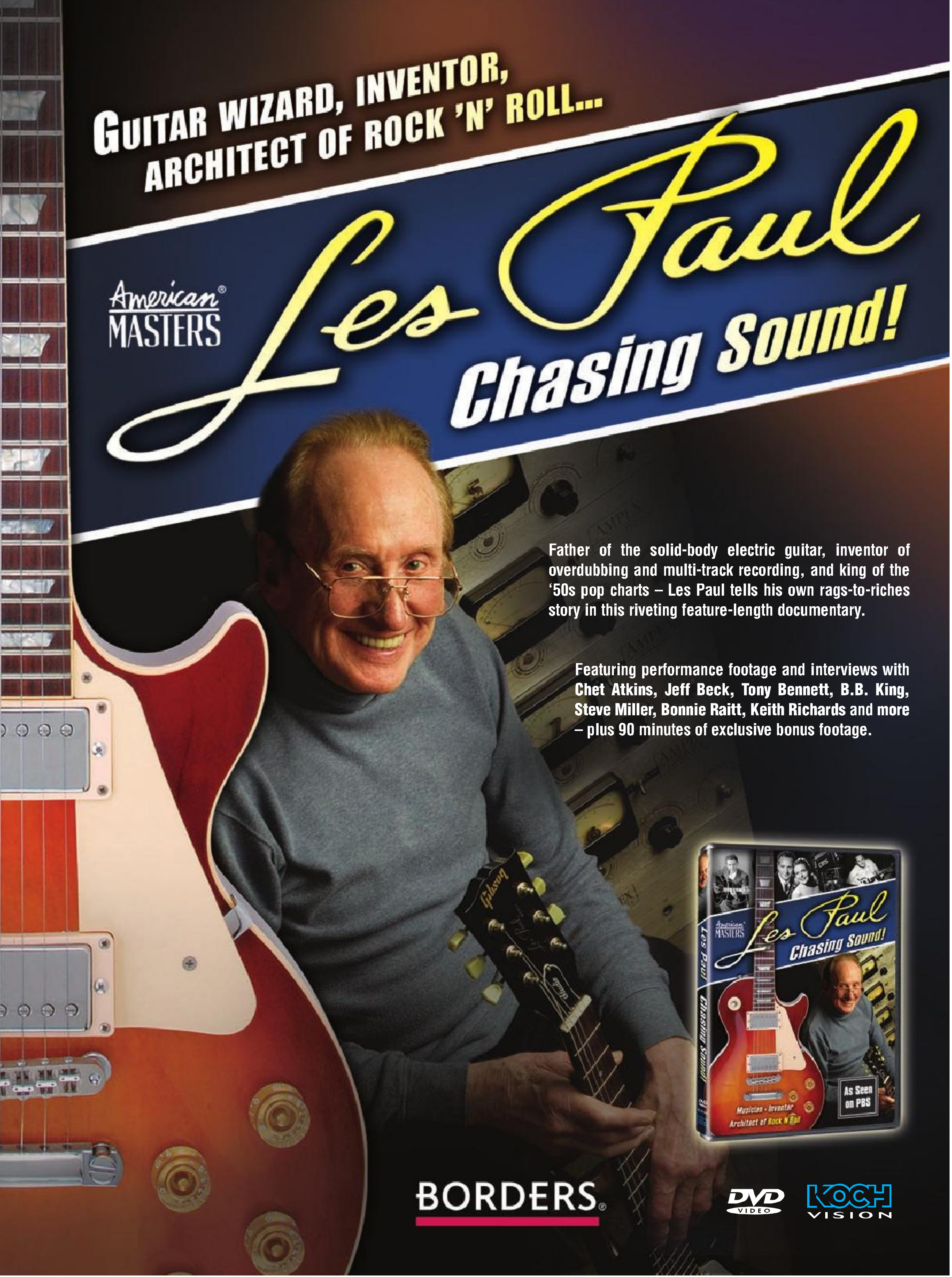
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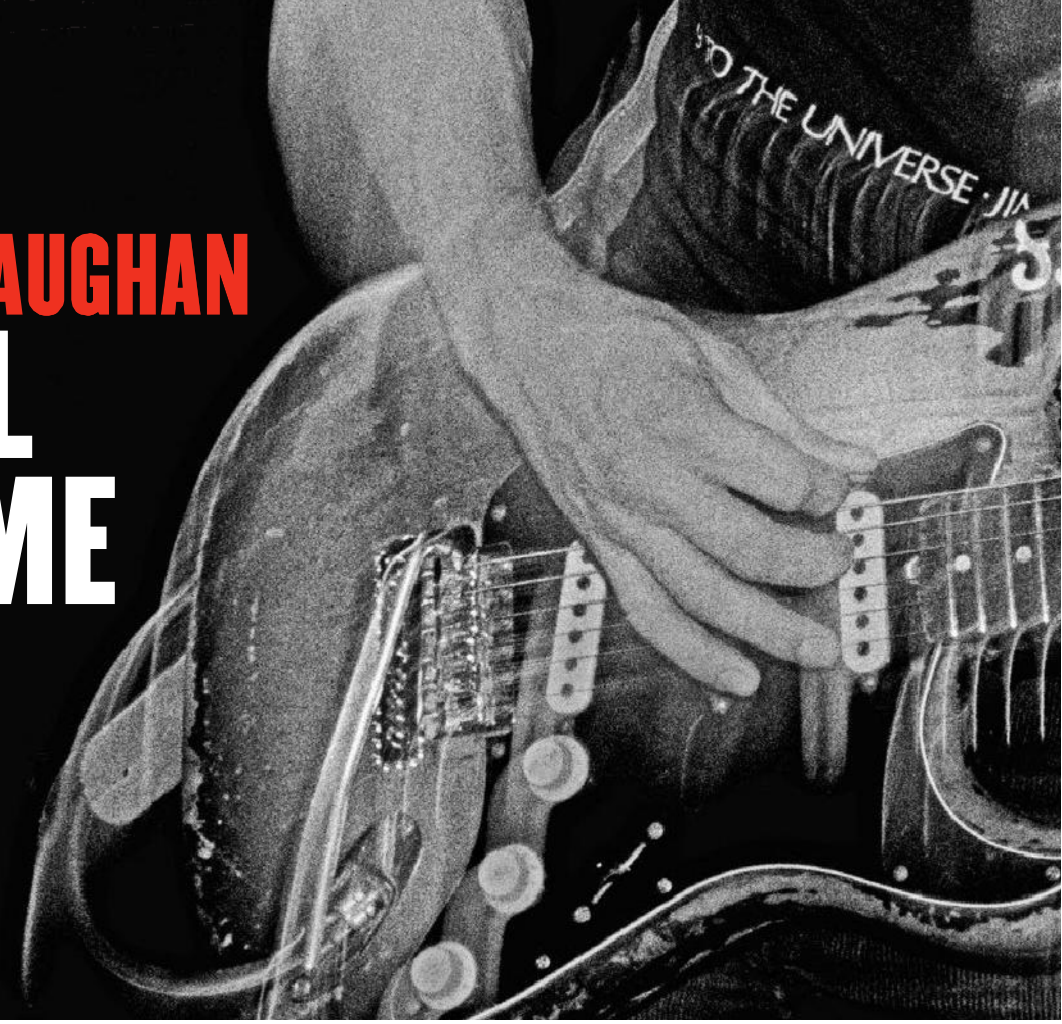


BY JESSE GRESS

If Edward Van Halen rescued rock guitar, then Stevie Ray Vaughan was surely the savior of the blues. Vaughan's bigger-than-life guitar style was forged from a vast melting pot of influences. His brother Jimmie Vaughan, Lonnie Mack, T-Bone Walker, Albert Collins, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Hubert Sumlin, B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King, Guitar Slim, and Jimi Hendrix were among those key to the Dallas native's development. When Vaughan and his band Double Trouble spearheaded the '80s blues revival, they were quick to give credit where due. These well-deserved props rekindled the smoldering careers of Albert King, Buddy Guy, and Albert Collins, propelling these bluesmen to near-superstar status. In turn, their acceptance of Vaughan as one of their own fulfilled the guitarist's lifelong dream to "take the color out of the blues."

SRV's recording career lasted almost twice as long as that of his hero Jimi Hendrix, yet both guitarists experienced a similar meteoric rise to fame and glory that was cut off at its peak. Additionally, each left behind a relatively sparse recorded legacy. Vaughan's total output during his lifetime was just four studio recordings (*Texas Flood, Couldn't Stand the Weather, Soul to Soul, and In Step*), one live album (*Live/Alive*), a duo project with brother Jimmie (*Family Style*), appearances on David Bowie's multi-platinum smash, *Let's Dance*, and a few single cuts on various compilations and soundtracks. He also produced and performed on a pair of Lonnie Mack releases and recorded with Albert King. As with Hendrix, a string of posthumous releases followed Vaughan's untimely death in 1990, including a boxed set, as well as recordings and videos from the 1982 and 1985 Montreaux Jazz Festivals, and a live Austin club date. But unlike Hendrix, these offer few hints to any future direction his music may have taken.

Squeezing the essence of Vaughan's Strat-wrangling into just five slots was tough. With few exceptions, I've chosen to concentrate on complete song riffs as opposed to solo licks. This way, you'll learn the framework for an entire song, or at least an entire chorus. To match the original recordings, you'll need to tune down one half-step.

5

"Stang's Swang" from *Couldn't Stand the Weather* (0:27-0:45). This fast-paced head reveals SRV's natural feel for the organ-trio stylings of Jimmy Smith, Brother Jack McDuff, and Richard Groove Holmes. Coaxing fat jazz tones from a Gibson Johnny Smith, Vaughan rides deep in the groove using two-bar call-and-response phrases to outline a cooking Im-V7 progression (*Gm-D7*) during the first half of the song's 16-bar A section. Repeat the descending triplet pickup on beats two and four in bars 1 and 2, playing it in between the root, 4 (*C*) and 4-to-♭5 bend (*C-D♭*) on beats one and three. The lick in bars 3 and 4 responds with syncopated double-stops. Follow the repeat through the altered V chords (*D7#9* and *D7♭9*) in the second ending—a four-bar variation of the main theme—and a string of sophisticated dominant II-V voicings (*C13-F9, B♭13-E♭9*, and *A♭13-D♭7#5#9*) that descend in whole-steps to sting a final *G5*. (The silent *D7#9* on beat two of the last measure is implied.)

4

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" from *Texas Flood* (0:00-0:24). Buddy Guy's song became an early showcase for Vaughan, who infused it with enough soul to draw praise from its composer. Any lone guitarist playing in a trio must cover a lot of melodic and rhythmic territory, and SRV did both with gusto. Beginning with a one-bar single-note pickup, Vaughan establishes the basic chordal rhythm pattern in the next measure, and then alternates between variations of both throughout the 12-bar blues progression. The

PHOTO: TRACY ANNE HART

single-note runs in every other measure provide a low-gear blueprint SRV's Lonnie Mack-inspired uptempo rave-up, "Scuttle Buttin'". Speed up the groove, and you've also got a model for the Earl King/Hendrix/SRV "Come On" groove.

3

"Texas Flood" from *Texas Flood* (0:00-0:18). You'll find nods to three different blues masters nestled in the four-bar intro to this slow blues. The pickup is derived from B.B. King's signature opener, but Vaughan makes it his own by segueing to hammered-chord and triple-stop action in bar 1. He transposes the same figure to the eighth position to cover the "quick change" to the IV chord (*C7*) in bar 2, and builds momentum by sliding to and from an upper-register *C9* voicing on beats three and four. Vaughan's half-step bends in beat one of the slick, single-note lick in bar 3 pay homage to T-Bone Walker, as does his hammered-and-pulled ♭9 variation of the classic T-Bone lick on beat two. Finally, the successive whole- and half-step bends that cross into beat three, the turnaround in bar 4, and Vaughan's entrance to the following chorus are pure Albert King. (Hint: You can decipher the complex-looking rhythms in bar 3 by reducing each dotted-quarter beat to a mini-measure of 3/8, or by doubling the value of each note and reading each beat in 3/4.)

2

"Pride and Joy" from *Texas Flood* (0:08-0:31). SRV's Texas shuffles were tough as nails, and this intro chorus is one of his meanest. Vaughan outlines the I (*E*) and IV (*A7*) chords in this 12-bar blues progression with an ascending root-3-5-6 bass line on the quarter-note downbeats and raked, all-purpose open-string passing chords on the eighth-note upbeats. The only exception occurs with the *A6* chords on beat four in every other measure, and a few open-*E* chords sprinkled throughout. Concentrate on hitting the tricky hammer-ons to *G#* and *C#* on the and of beat two in bars 1 through 8, as you simultaneously reverse-rake the open strings. And though the main figure is notated in swing eighth-notes, Vaughan's rhythms straddle the line between these and dotted-eighth-to-sixteenth-note groupings. The idea is to go for feel and groove over complete accuracy, so don't worry about hitting a few extra open strings now and then. The single-note runs and ♭7-over-5 diads in the V-IV-I-V turnaround salute SRV's Texas roots with a tip of the ten-gallon to Lightnin' Hopkins. (Count-in tip: The four-bar intro heard on the recording begins on the and of beat one.)

1

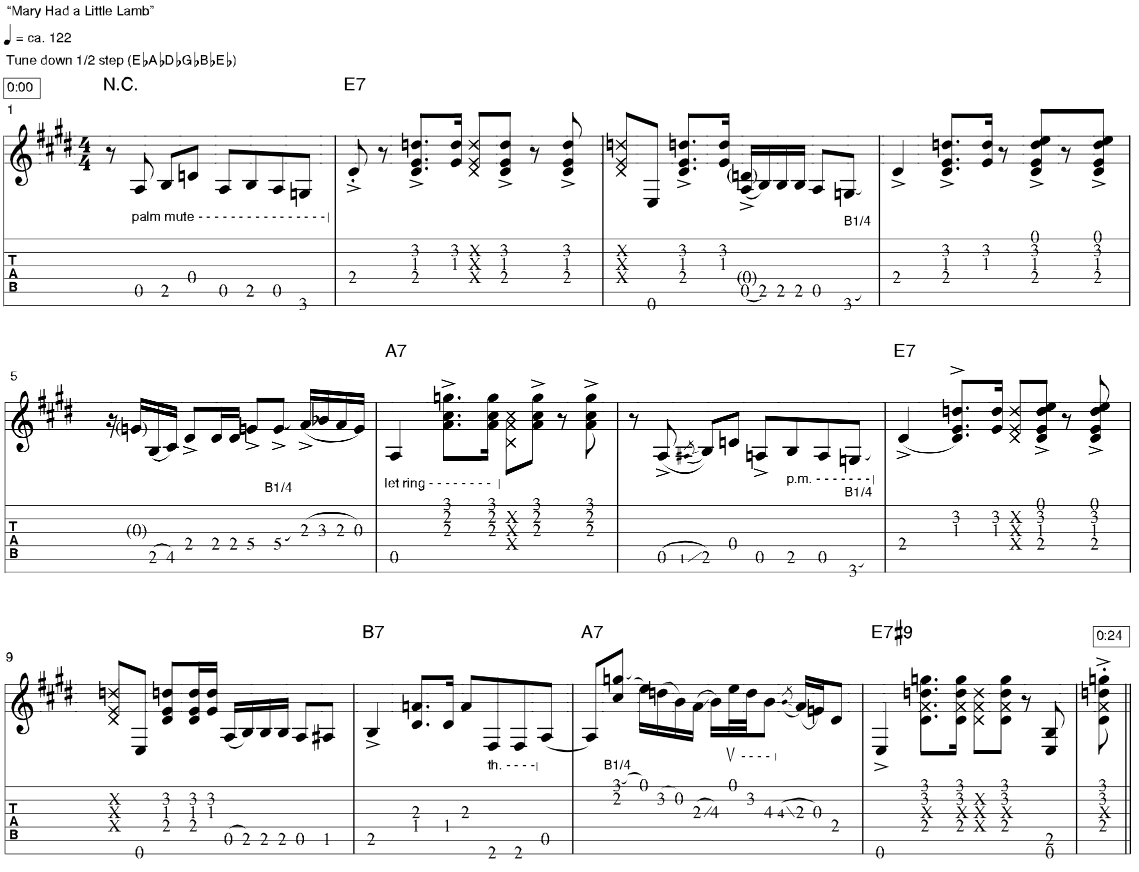
"Lenny" from *Texas Flood* (0:27-0:45). Vaughan's watery, Jimi-style chord melodies on this beautiful ballad create an unforgettable ebb and flow that rightfully earns "Lenny" our number-one slot. Coinciding with the entrance of the rhythm section, Vaughan begins this excerpt with eight bars of lush, whammy-vibrated *Emaj13* and *A6* voicings decorated with "Little Wing"-style embellishments. Played with identical fingerings, the Hendrix-inspired progression of parallel arpeggiated sixth chords climbs chromatically from *A6* to *B♭6* to *B6*, and then jumps a minor third to *D6*. Fret the bass notes in these chord shapes with your thumb, or opt for a more traditional grip—the choice is yours. Vaughan plays the same chordal movement transposed a major third lower (*G6-B♭6*) before heading back to *A6* and resolving to a bar-wiggled *E5* chord played with natural harmonics. Sweet!

For more titanic SRV licks, check out these full song and solo transcriptions: "Lenny" (March '91 *GP*), "Rivera Paradise" (May '99 *GP*), "Leave My Girl Alone" (March '01 *GP*), and "Scuttle Buttin'" (June '04 *GP*), as well as Jesse Gress' Backbeat books, *GuitaRevolution* and *Guitar Licks of the Texas Blues-Rock Heroes*.

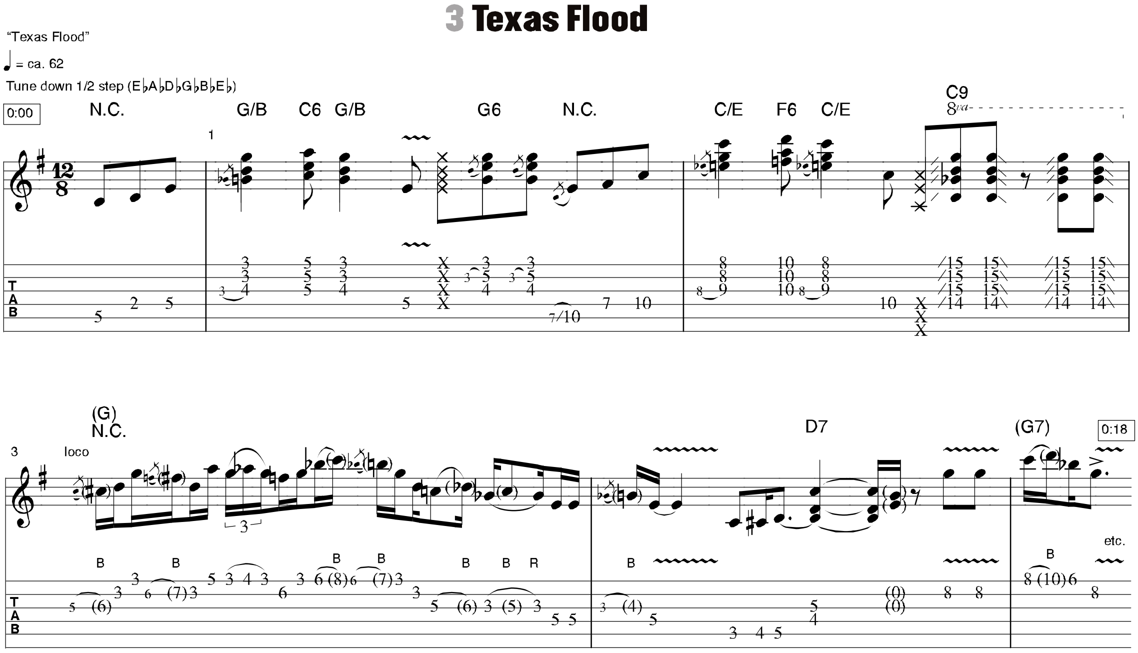
—*Originally published in the March 2006 issue of* Guitar Player

5 Stang's Swang

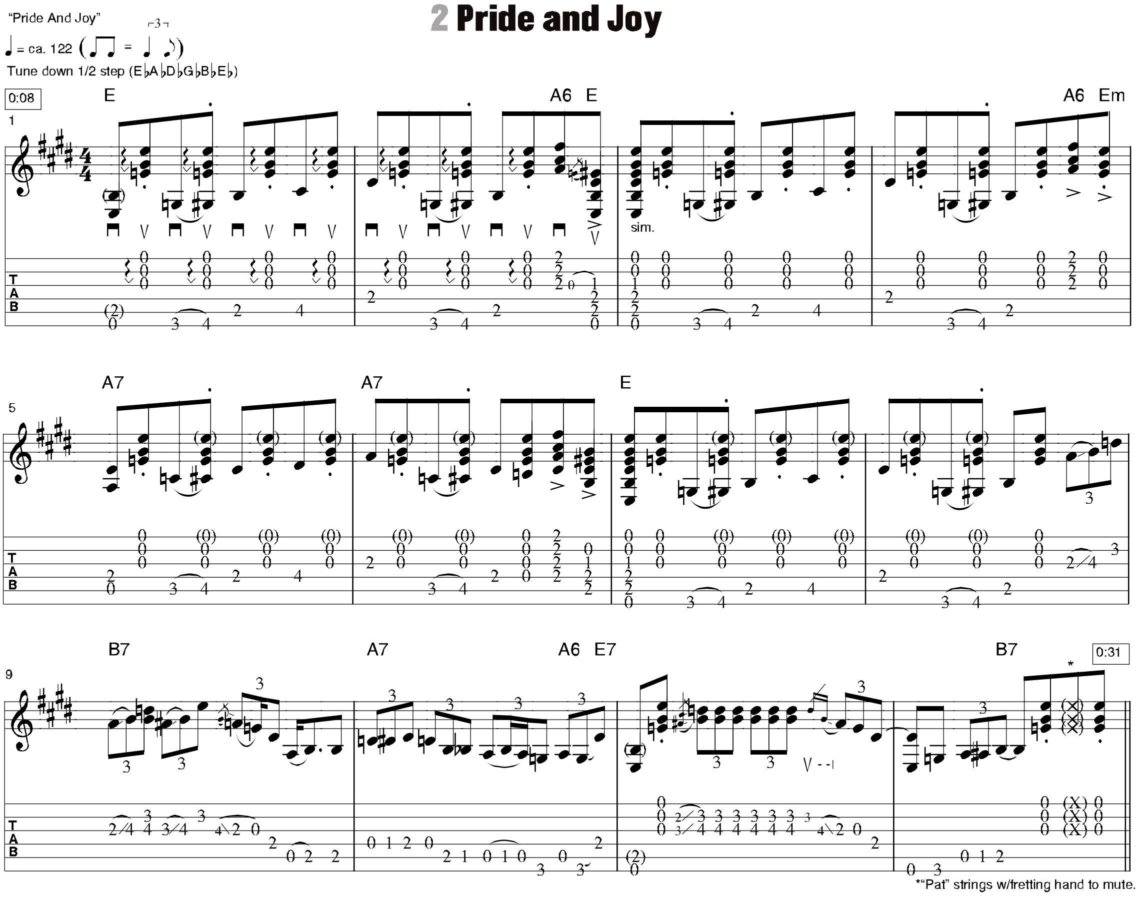
4 Mary Had a Little Lamb



3 Texas Flood



2 Pride and Joy



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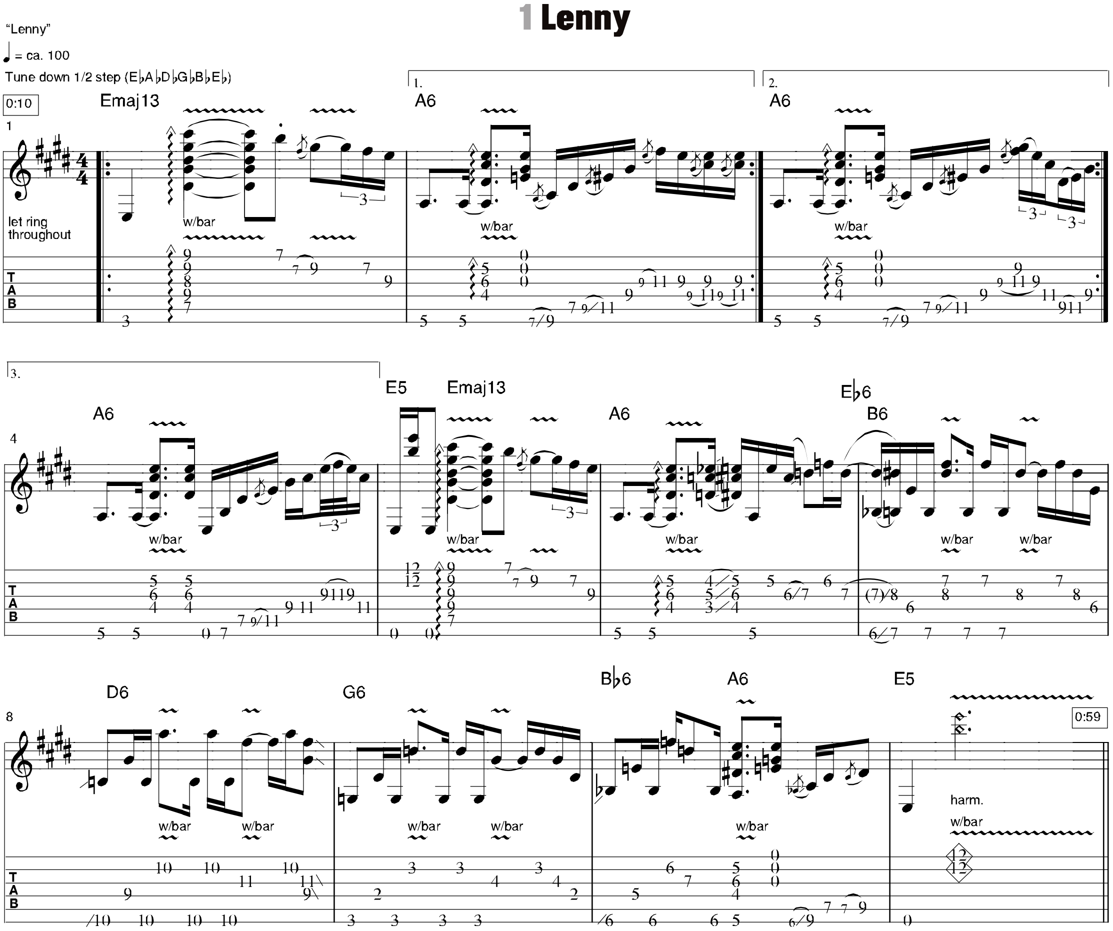
1 Lenny



Lenny
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Rock Heart Blues Soul

A Seminar on the SRV Style

By Jesse Gress

Blend the styles of Albert, B.B., Freddie, and Earl King, T-Bone Walker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Muddy Waters, Hubert Sumlin, Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Albert Collins, Magic Sam, Guitar Slim, Jimmy Reed, Chuck Berry, Lonnie Mack, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Peter Green, and Johnny Winter in a musical Cuisinart. Strain through a loving and fertile imagination. What do you get? A lesson in state-of-the-art blues guitar courtesy of the late, great Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Vaughan combined an encyclopedic knowledge of blues phraseology with an uncanny instinct for spontaneous reorganization. He was a true improvisor.

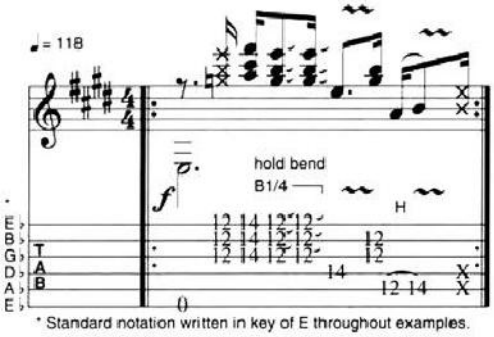
"He never played it the same way once, much less twice," according to his brother Jimmie, who was responsible for teaching Stevie Ray to teach himself.

While SRV soaked up all music like a sponge, he constantly cited Jimi Hendrix as a dominant influence. Hendrix's guiding light permeated Vaughan's entire repertoire of straight rockers, swinging shuffles, slow blues, R&B rave-ups, and dreamy ballads. It was almost as if he could tap into Hendrix's improvisational spirit and ask, "How might Jimi have played this?"

Like Hendrix, Vaughan relied on an ever-evolving gear setup, but the real key to the "king tone" was his ability to pull amazing sounds and nuances from the instrument with his hands alone. Usually tuned down a half-step, Vaughan opted, unlike Hendrix, for mammoth-sized strings—sometimes as extreme as a .018-.074 set! Heavy strings gave Vaughan a larger-than-life sound, but they also took their toll. He once showed a pair of *Guitar Player* editors how he repaired the divots in his left-hand fingers by applying Super Glue to his right forearm, setting his fingertips in the adhesive, and then ripping the fingers away, sealed with a "skin patch" torn from his right arm. I once shook SRV's hand after a performance, and his fingers on both hands were wrapped in blood-soaked bandages—silent testimony to the commitment he put into every note.

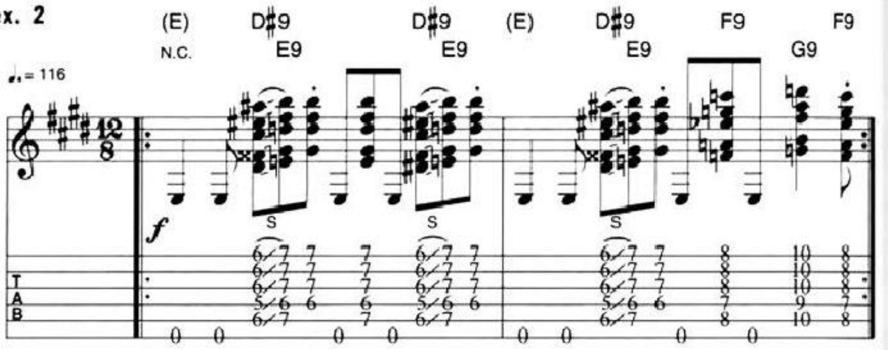
Let's begin this lesson with a look at SRV's rhythm stylings. **Ex. 1** illustrates a typical Hendrix-influenced figure. The multi-register jumps create a simultaneous rhythm-and-lead effect. Steady your "sixteenth-note clock" and play the example a few dozen times, adding your own variations. **Ex. 2** surrounds a tonic *E9* with chromatic jabs before concluding with parallel 9th chords. The open-*E* pedal creates the illusion of more than one part. Use alternate picking.

ex. 1



* Standard notation written in key of E throughout examples.

ex. 2



In **Ex. 3**—an uptempo single-note rhythm figure with chordal punctuation—the first two-bar phrase outlines *A7*, while the second implies *A7#9* (or *Am7*, for lack of a *C#*). For total authenticity, fret the sixth string with your thumb.

ex. 3

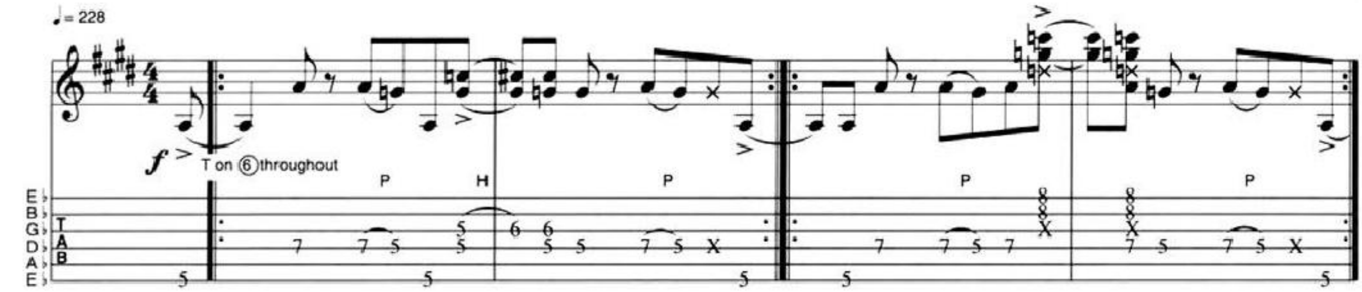
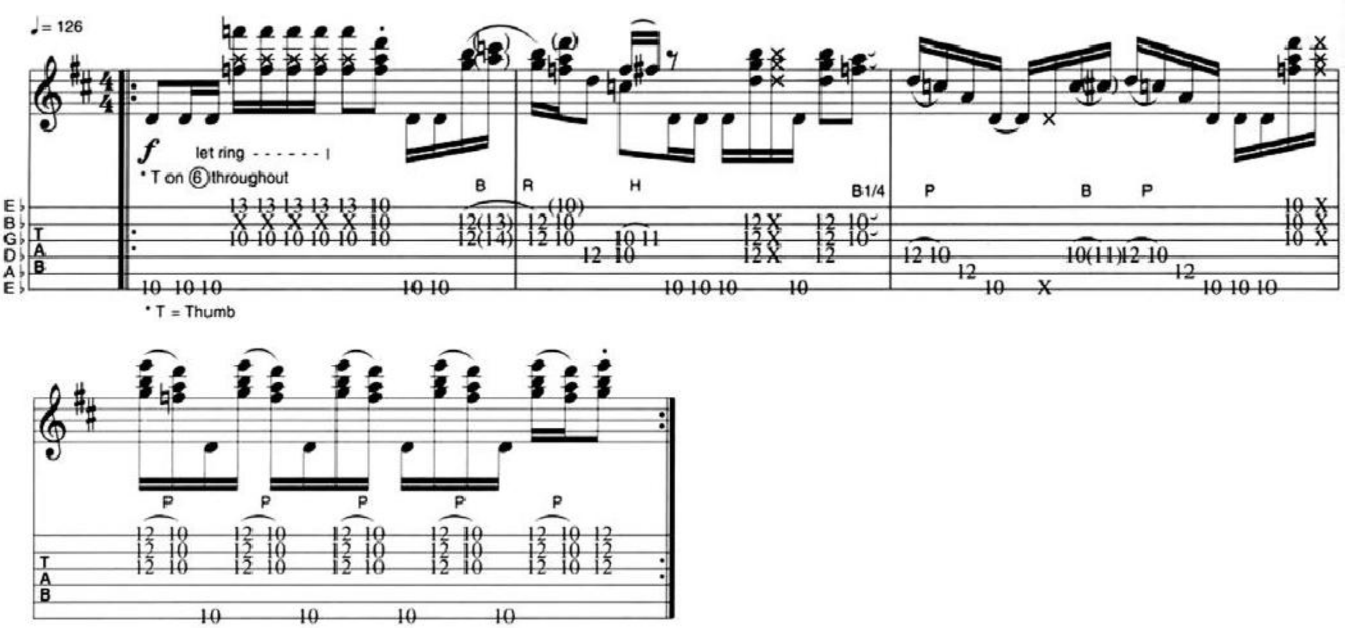


PHOTO: TRACY ANNE HART

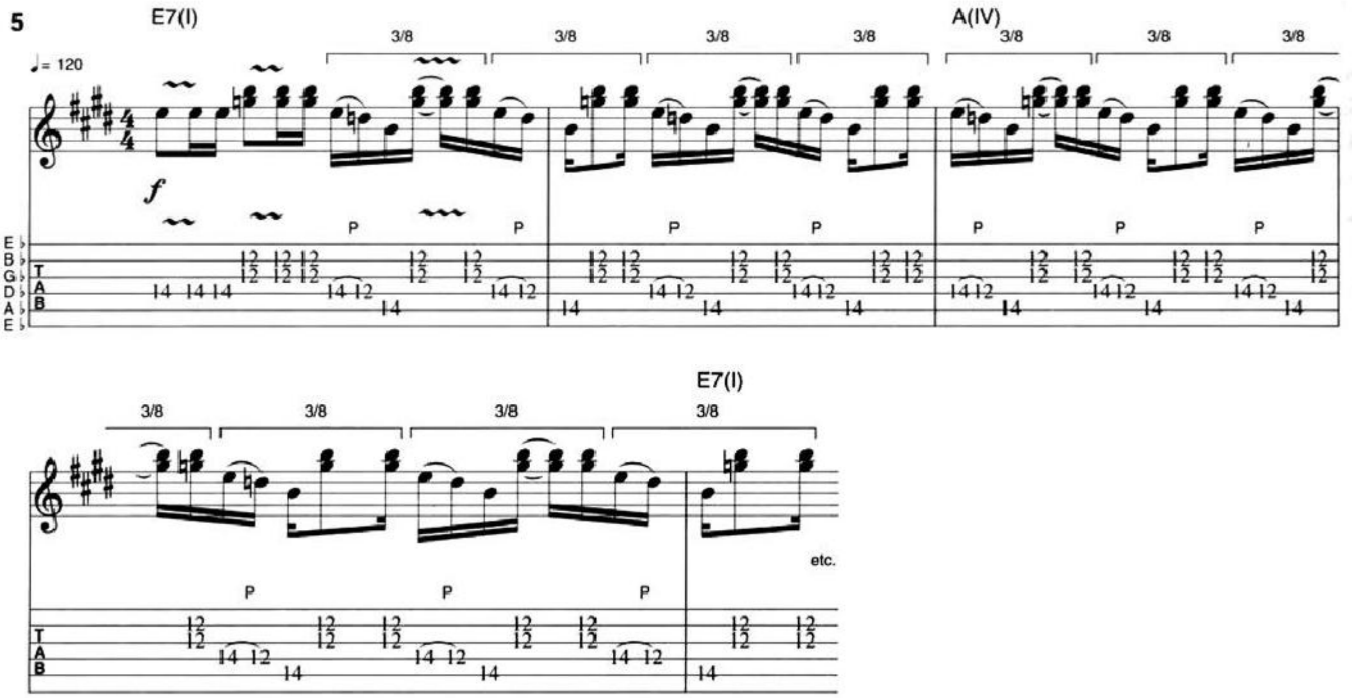
Ex. 4 combines Hendrix-y R&B octaves, double-stop bends, and register leaps before concluding with a cool three-against-four cross rhythm.

ex. 4



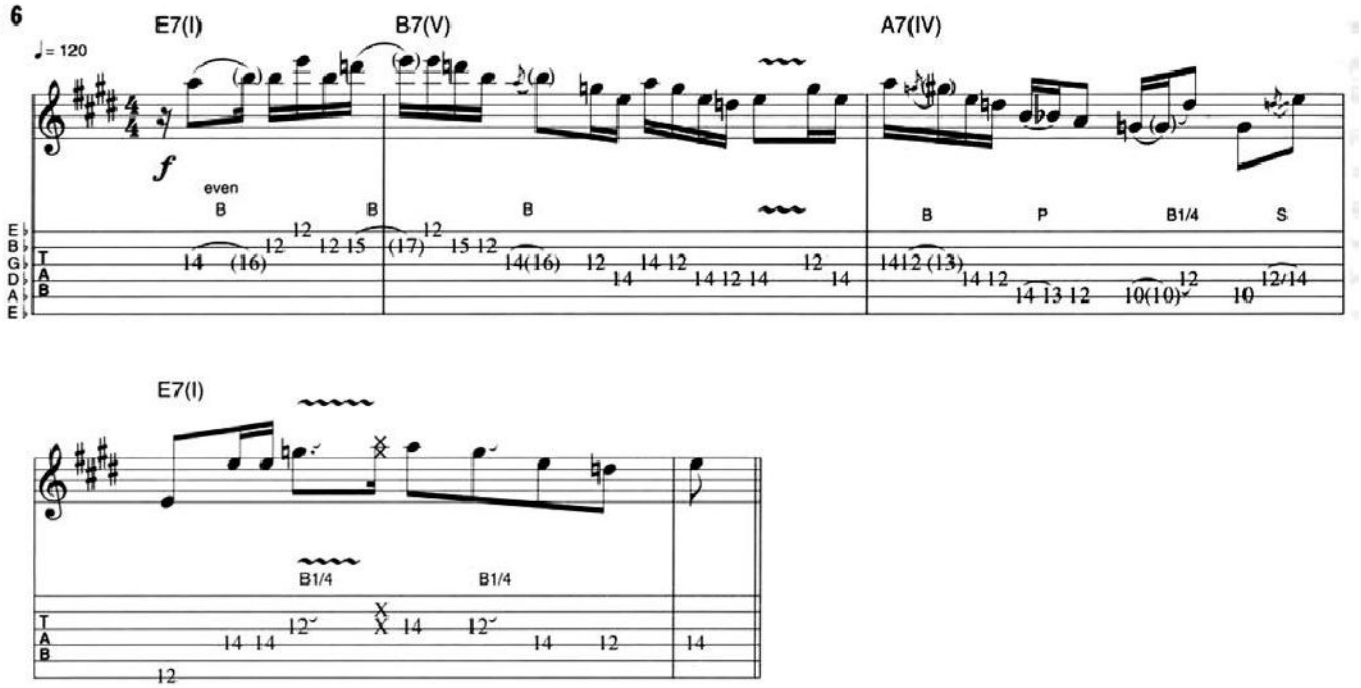
The three-against-four cross rhythm in **Ex. 5** creates an exciting against-the-grain effect. As the motif starts halfway through bar 1, it doesn't recycle until the middle of bar 4.

ex. 5

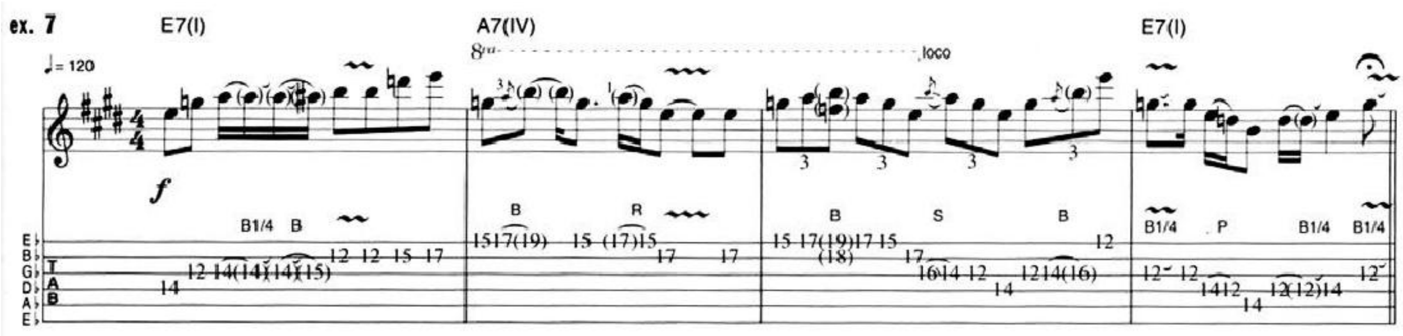


Played over a V-IV-I progression, **Ex. 6** milks the twelfth-position *E* pentatonic-minor box for all it's worth, melding Hendrix and British blues elements.

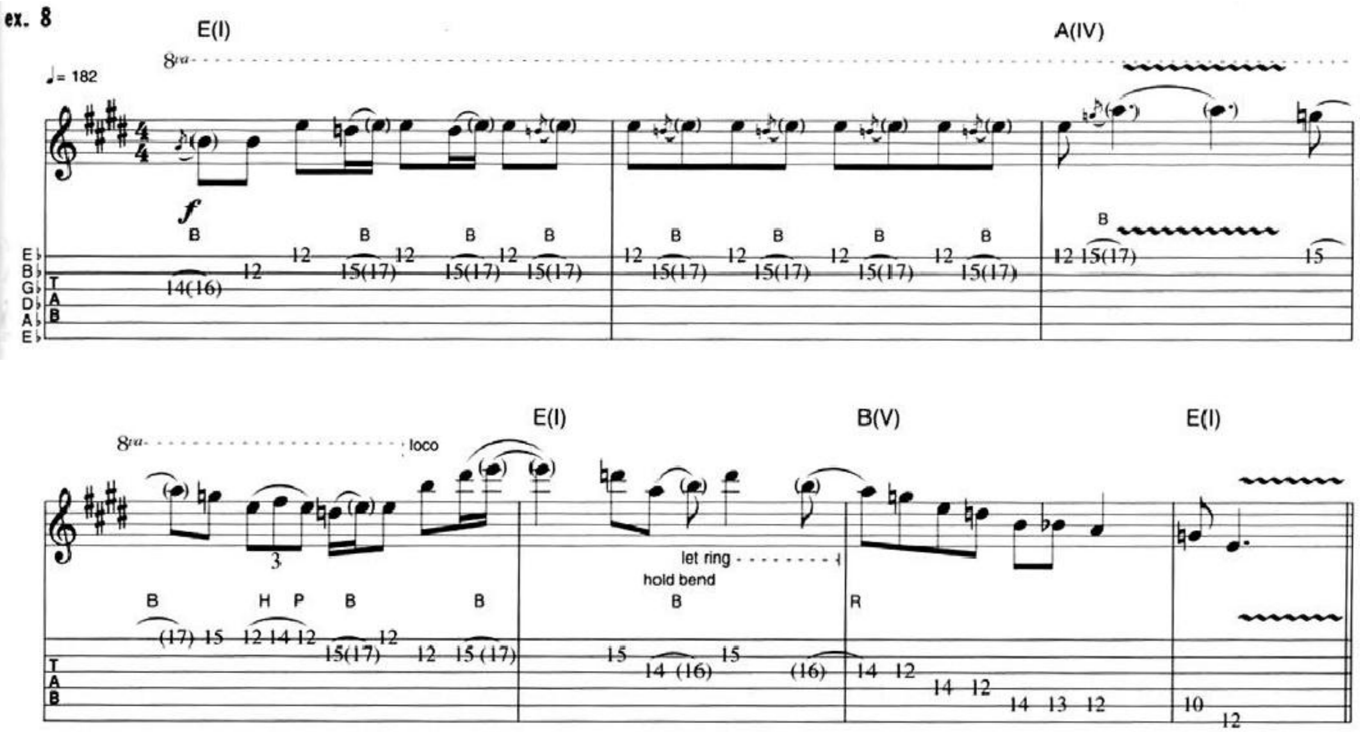
ex. 6

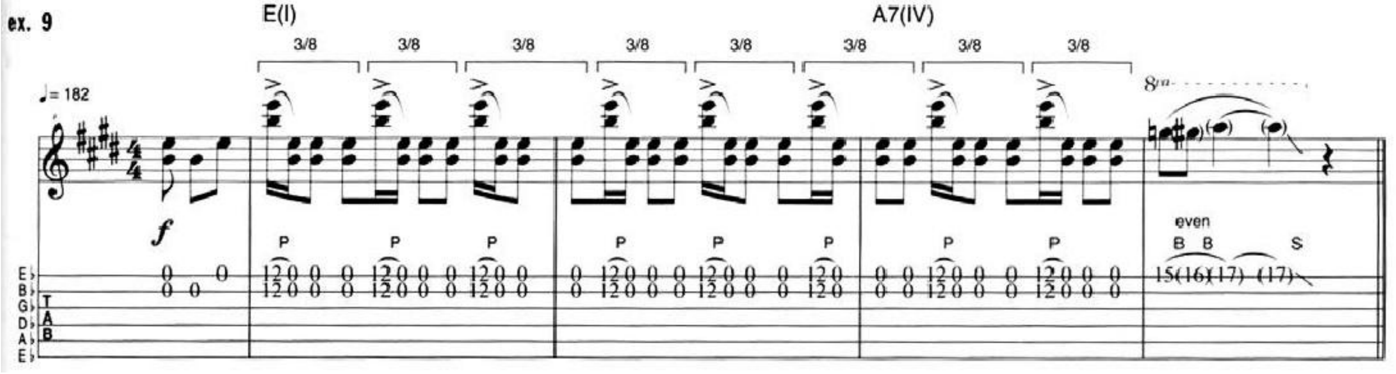


Ex. 7's opening sweet-'n'-sour bends precede a IV chord phrase that evokes Albert King in bars 2 and 3, and Clapton in bar 4. The Albert-style index-finger bends midway though bar 2 are less than comfy, but the results are worth the pain.

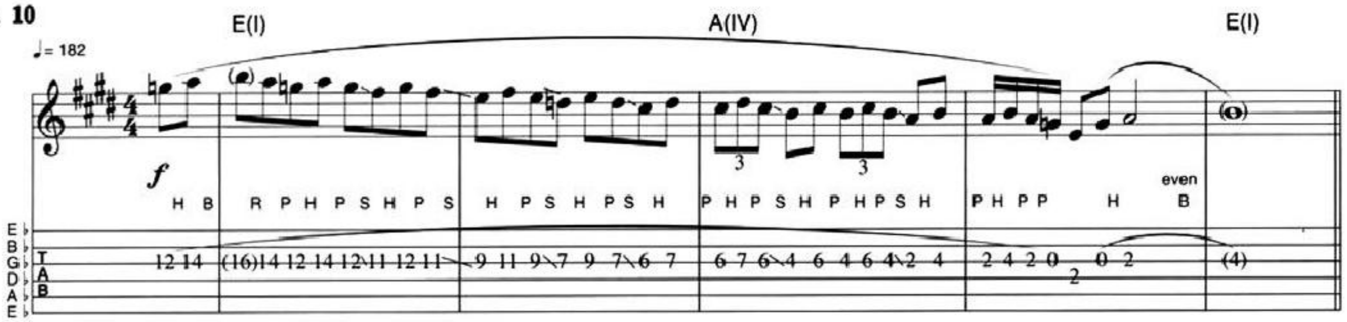


A straight-eighth groove similar to Earl King's "Come On, Pt. 1" (covered as "Pt. 2" by Hendrix, and "Pt. 3" by SRV) underscores Examples 8, 9, and 10. Chuck Berry-style unison bends open **Ex. 8**. In the third measure, SRV shifts into a Hendrix vibe. **Ex. 9** emphasizes a three-against-eight rhythm using open-string pedal tones punctuated by octave pull-offs similar to those on Hendrix's "Come On, Pt. 2" solo. A single pick attack kicks off the legato excursion in **Ex. 10**, which navigates a I-IV progression entirely on the *G* string—another Hendrix-ism.



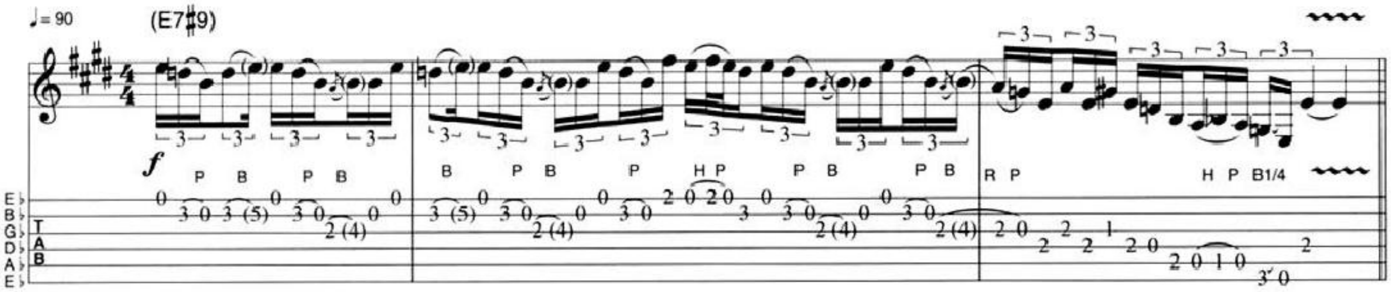


ex. 10



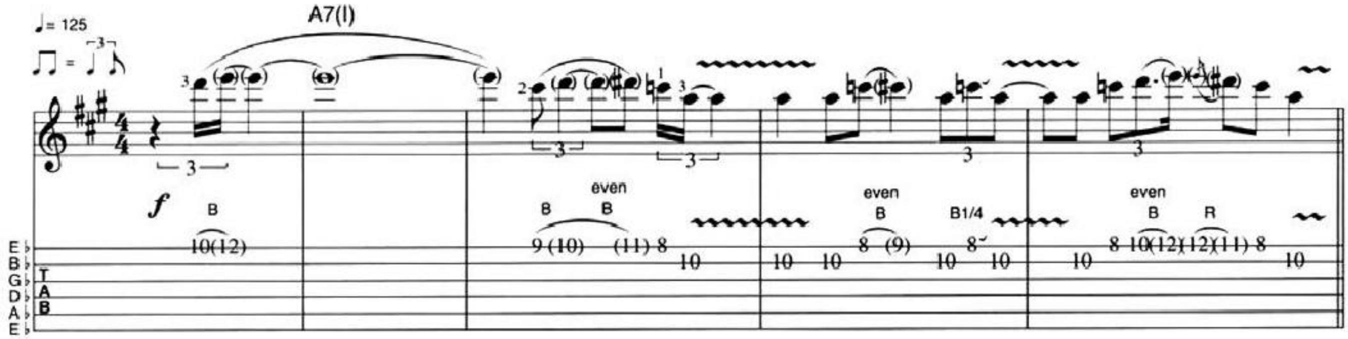
Ex. 11 explores some open-position possibilities over the groove to Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)." The flashy, open-string runs illustrate Lonnie Mack's impact on SRV.

ex. 11

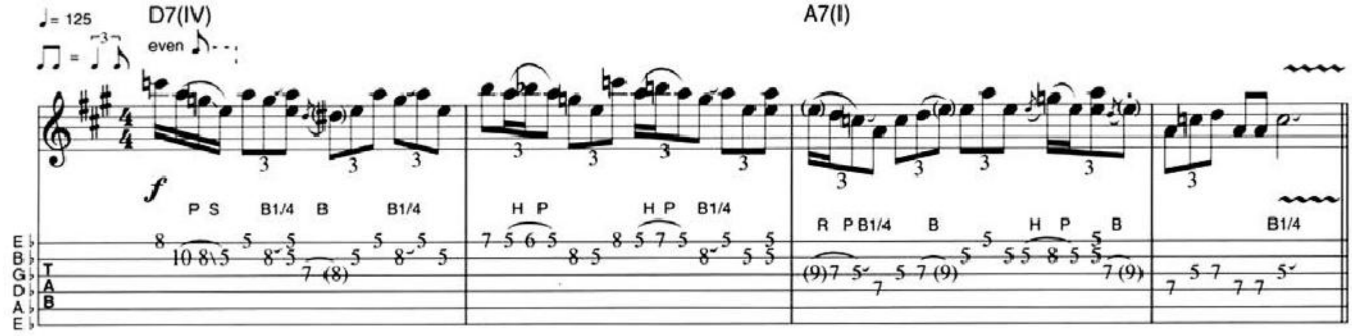


The opening four bars of a 12-bar shuffle, **Ex. 12a** is a mini-ode to Albert King. Play the first bend with your 3rd finger, and the second with your 2nd finger, working your way down to the index finger "dee-dah" lick. The partially released bend halfway through bar 4 adds a bittersweet touch. **Ex. 12b** covers the IV-I change with a subtle mixture of straight and swung eighth-notes. (The *B♭* over the IV chord is something you don't hear too often.) The V-IV-I-V progression in **Ex. 12c** completes the 12-bar form. Listen closely—you'll hear echoes of practically everyone cited in the opening paragraph.

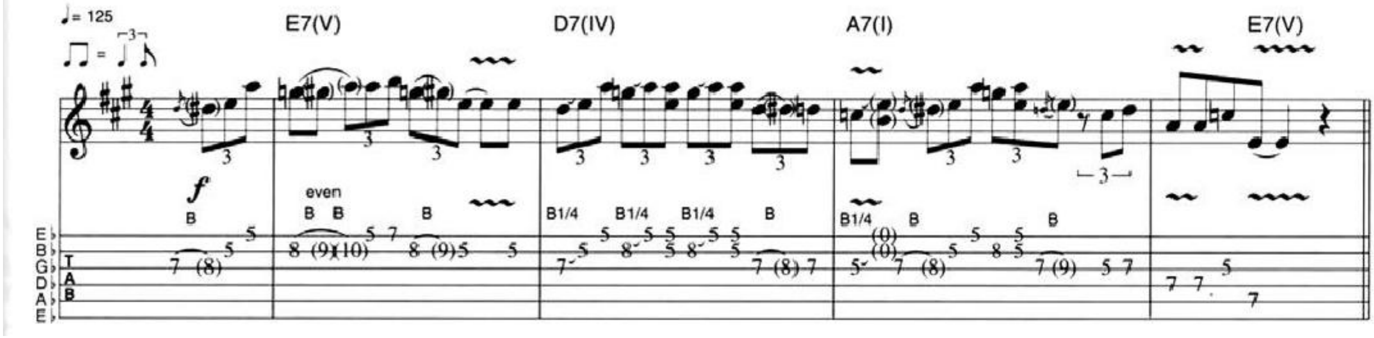
ex. 12a



ex. 12b

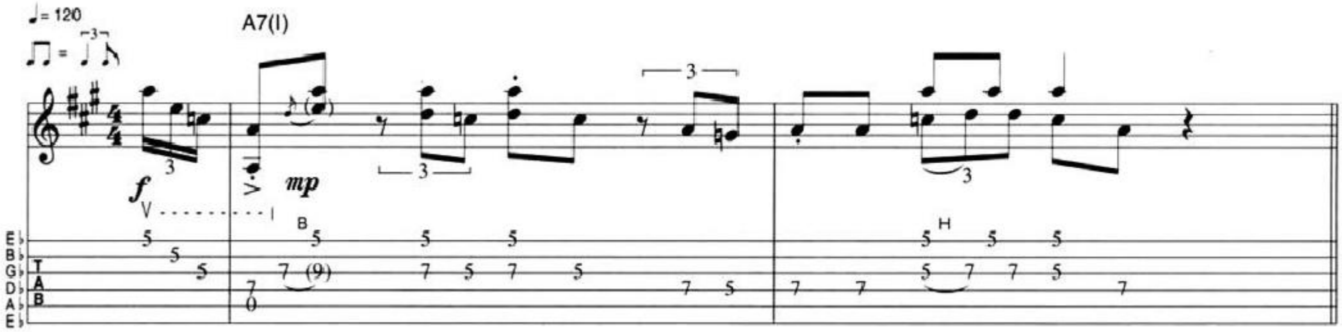


ex. 12c

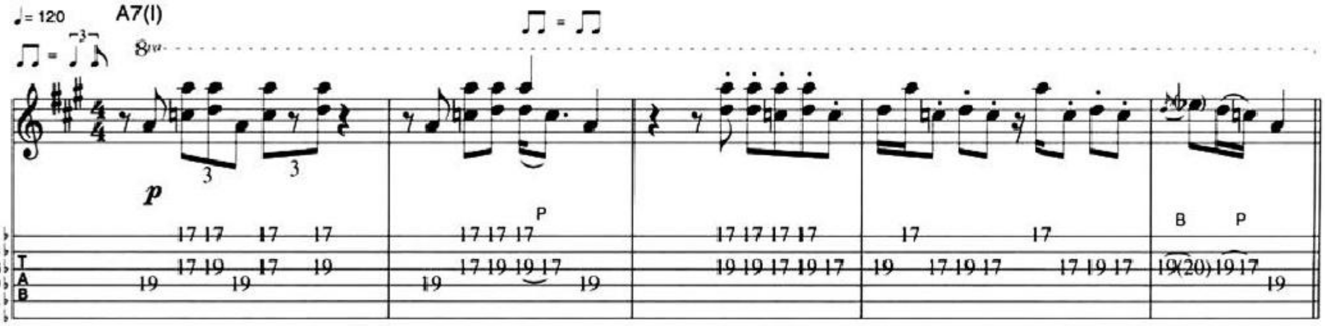


Ex. 13a confirms Vaughan's love of jazz organ trios. After a signature string rake, he lowers the dynamics with organ-like double-stops beneath a tonic pedal tone. **Ex. 13b** features more of the same, with beautiful motivic development, and an interesting blend of even and swung eighths. Play these examples fingerstyle or with hybrid picking.

ex. 13a

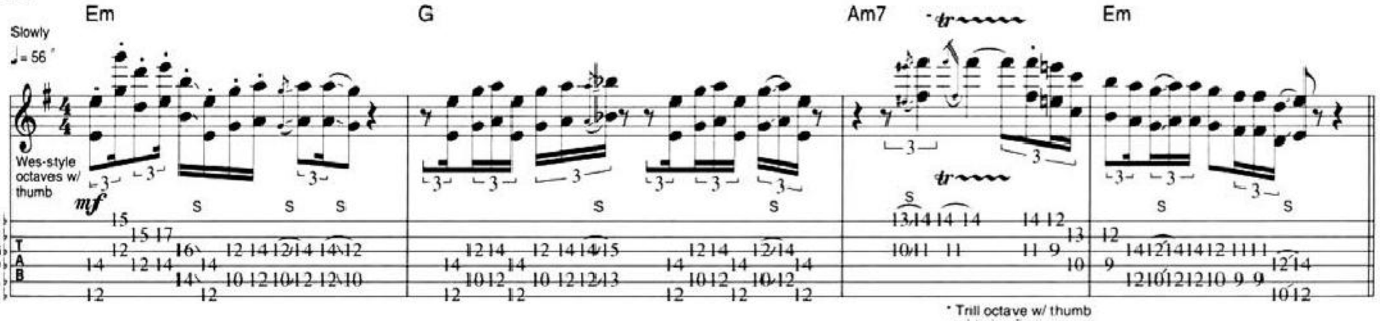


ex. 13b



Another aspect of SRV's melting-pot approach appears in **Ex. 14**—a jazzy excursion using Wes-Montgomery-style octaves (play 'em with your thumb). Check out the nifty motivic development, and the exceptionally cool melody played over *Am7-Em*. *—Originally published in the December 1993 issue of* Guitar Player

ex. 14



LONE STAR STATE OF MIND

Texas Blues Guitar From ALBERT COLLINS to ZZ TOP

By Jon Chappell

Despite what legend and lore may tell you, the blues did not originate in the Delta. It grew out of the African American experience in the early 20th Century, *wherever* musically inventive people faced oppression and adversity. And that was happening in plenty of places besides northwest Mississippi. The blues was a product of its times, and so developed in parallel in many areas of the southern U.S. Each region produced its own dialect of the blues, though the Mississippi Delta and the Piedmont of the Southeast were certainly major centers. But of all the regions where blues flourished, Texas—being practically its own country in terms of culture, population, and size, and being home to hotspots such as Austin, Houston, and Dallas—had a profound impact on blues. The Lone Star state still remains a major influence on modern music styles, including and especially the blues.

Besides the performers, there are some Texas genres that are closely related to the blues. For example, Western swing is often called "Texas swing," and a "Texas shuffle" refers to a groove that is more swing-like than Delta or Chicago shuffles, and more laidback than the bouncier two-beat stylings of the Piedmont. But what often defines any "school" is the makeup of its members. And Texas has put more important blues guitarists on the map through more periods in history than any other region.

Songsters and Folkies

In the early days of Texas blues, the sound was a lot like the stuff coming out of the Delta. It was acoustic, song-based (with only occasional instrumental breaks), and it freely mixed folk music with true blues. Leadbelly and Blind Willie Johnson didn't discriminate between folk, popular songs, and blues in their repertoire, but played all their material with a world weariness and a blues heart. One of the best-known performers from this early era was Blind Lemon Jefferson. He showed remarkable variety in his playing, which was a loose conglomerate of fingerpicking, slide, and strumming techniques, all to back his powerful and cutting vocal delivery. Jefferson influenced two significant performers, fellow Texan and Lightnin' Hopkins, as well as the Delta-born B.B. King.

T-Bone

Although jazz guitarists became a dime a dozen after electric guitars became affordable in the 1930s and '40s, one name stands alone as the early, lone voice of electric blues guitar: T-Bone Walker. Aaron Thibeaux Walker ("T-Bone" is a corruption of his middle name) is one of the most influential blues guitarists of all time. He inspired countless electric players—Muddy Waters, Eric Clapton, Otis Rush, Magic Sam, Buddy Guy, Albert King, Albert Collins, Freddie King, and, most significantly, B.B. King—because it was he who brought the electric guitar to blues, and along with Muddy Waters,

helped transform acoustic country blues into the urbanized, electric sound of Los Angeles, Memphis, Kansas City, and Chicago.

Walker's style and musical sensibilities were sophisticated and evolved, qualities he developed probably for very pragmatic reasons: He was a versatile and skilled musician and master showman who worked a lot. He incorporated jazz harmony, string bends, and a harmonic sophistication (such as ninth chords in his rhythm playing) his Delta counterparts would hardly recognize. In the key of *A*, **Ex. 1** shows a lead passage in the style of Walker's (and perhaps the blues') most famous tune, "Call It Stormy Monday"—his own composition, and one where he really stretched out, taking the blues to places other melodic players of the day had never been.

Delta players tended to stick to the minor pentatonic scale (*A*, *C*, *D*, *E*, *G*), and Texas-shuffle players would throw in the major 3 (*C#*) and sometimes the major 6 (*F#*), which Walker did too, but one particular touch gives away the T-Bone-ness of this lick: the use of the major 2 (*B* in the key of *A*), which occurs in beat 3 of the first bar. That unusual sound was all T-Bone.

Classic Electric Blues

Just after World War II, a great migration was happening: Many musicians from the rural, deep South headed north to the more industrialized cites, including St. Louis, Kansas City, and of course, Chicago. As transportation became more viable as a way of getting musicians from place to place, recordings were becoming more accessible, so one didn't actually have to hear someone live to listen to them, study them, and be influenced by them. Still, regional alliances persisted, and two of the Texas-based performers who came into their own in the post-War era were Albert Collins and Freddie King.

The Iceman Cometh

Nicknamed the "Master of the Telecaster" and "The Iceman," Albert Collins was an accomplished showman and a fierce guitarist. Born in 1932, in Leona, Texas, he received his initial musical training on the keyboards, but he soon picked up the guitar and started hanging out in Houston clubs and absorbing the influence of his Texas-based idols, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Lightnin' Hopkins (a distant relative), and T-Bone Walker.

Collins concocted a unique recipe for snarly sounding blues that consisted of a Fender Telecaster, a capo (which was often strapped on at the 5th, 7th, even 9th fret), unorthodox tunings, and a stinging fingerstyle approach that fairly snapped notes out of the guitar. The essence of Collins' style was his aggressive attack, piercing sound and staccato phrasing.

A Two-Pick Man

Freddie King played with a plastic thumbpick and a metal fingerpick, in a two-finger plucking style that he said he learned from Muddy Waters sideman Jimmy Rogers and Jimmy Reed sideman Eddie Taylor. King's early influences included fellow Texan Lightnin' Hopkins and saxman/jump blues star Louis Jordan, but he himself influenced others, too, including Jeff Beck, Keith Richards, Jerry Garcia, Peter Green, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, and John Mayer.

King's best-known song is the infectious instrumental "Hide Away," recorded in 1961, and covered by John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and just about every blues cover band in North America and Europe since. Following the success of this tune, which placed on both the pop and R&B charts, King followed up with more instrumentals, including "San-Ho-Zay," "The Stumble," and "Side Tracked."

Example 2 shows a lick in the "Hide Away" style. Keep the approach light and crisp, as King did, and play "on top" (slightly ahead) of the beat to capture his sound. Note that that free-flowing feel is aided by the placement of the riffs in open position, and by the liberal use of hammer-ons and pull-offs. What keeps this lick from sounding "too vanilla" is the way King switches from the happy, *E* major pentatonic (*E*, *F#*, *G#*, *B*, *C#*) sound in bars 1 and 2 to the minor pentatonic notes (*E*, *G*, *A*, *B*, *D*) in bar 3.

Texas Blues-Rock Titan

Blues-rock firebrand Johnny Winter exploded out of Texas in 1968, and proceeded to become one of the top concert draws of the early '70s. Winter was a fiery soloist who played with a thumbpick, and his speedy solos lit up a number of gold albums. You can hear him trade red-hot blues leads with co-guitarist Rick Derringer on the 1971 cover of B.B. King's "It's My Own Fault" (from *Johnny Winter and Live*). To play like this legendary Lone Star guitar slinger, develop the best blues vocabulary you can and work on making any phrase fit in any groove—straight, shuffle, or sixteenths-based, fast or slow.

A typical Winter blues line, **Ex. 3** is aggressive and authoritative, and just as much of a blues figure as a rock one. Note that the opening phrase is up high above the 12th fret, which helps give it its searing, soaring quality. The first complete bar kicks off with a whole-step bend followed by a couple of "fall-offs" (descending slides at the end of notes) and is based on 12th-position *A* minor pentatonic moves. After shifting down to 10th position, the next phrase is played out of a 5th-position *A* minor pentatonic position.

Just Lookin' for Some Top

For decades now, the power trio ZZ Top has been serving up a greasy and volatile mix of Texan music and the blues. Unlike Johnny Winter, guitarist Billy Gibbons has never been a high-speed player, but his slow, smoldering solos set the standard for "soulfulness" in the rock guitar world in the '70s and '80s. Gibbons is a masterful blues stylist with a well-rounded approach, but as a lead player, he's best known for a single technique: his edge-of-the-pick (or *pinch*) harmonics.

To play a pinch harmonic, grasp your plectrum so that only a small piece of the tip can be seen from between your thumb and index finger. As you strike the string, give the pick a little forward twist, almost digging into the string and touching the flesh of your finger to the string, to stop or mute it slightly. With some practice you should be able to evoke a *harmonic*—a high, bell-like overtone resulting from the string being partially stopped.

Example 4 shows two of Gibbons' hallmarks—his smoky, Texas-style riffing and a rippin' single-note blues line that closes off with his patented pinch harmonics. Play the rhythm riff with *hybrid picking*—where the middle and ring fingers pluck the double-stops on the 3rd and 4th strings while the pick plays the open *A* string. The minor pentatonic riff in bar 7 serves to set up the lead lick in the last two bars. These slower quarter-note triplets allow the pinch harmonics to ring out for maximum effectiveness.

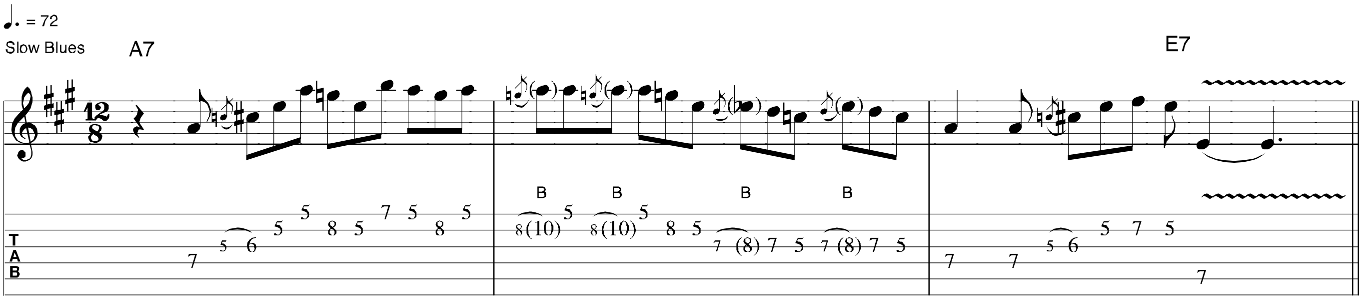
Add plenty of distortion, and those pinched notes will scream and squeal. Move your picking hand up and down the string to find the most articulate harmonics. Gibbons' fat lead tone is legendary among rock players. He's particularly famous for using a flametop 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard lovingly named "Pearly Gates," as well as for the pink late-'50s Strat given to him by Jimi Hendrix, and for claiming not to use a pick, but a Mexican peso.

The Greatest Modern Bluesman

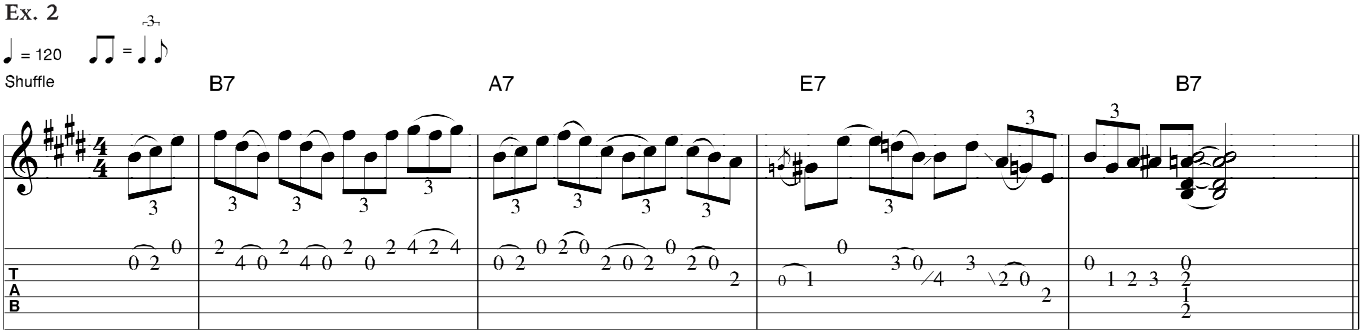
Austin's legendary Stevie Ray Vaughan burst into the spotlight in 1983, first on David Bowie's *Let's Dance* album, and then on his solo debut, Texas Flood. Aside from the fact that Stevie Ray could channel Jimi Hendrix's Strat attack [often performing "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" and "Little Wing" as a tribute], he developed his own style that put the Fender Stratocaster back on the map as a definitive rock instrument. Throughout the '80s, this guitarist blew minds with both a blistering blues technique as well as the fattest guitar tone imaginable. His stunning lead playing overshadowed the fact that he was also one of the strongest rhythm guitarists the electric guitar has ever known. He achieved his tone by using a combination of classic Fender, Marshall, and Dumble tube amps, pumped up with an Ibanez Tube Screamer TS-808 overdrive pedal, as well as a vintage Strat set up with finger-mangling heavy strings.

Since Vaughan could play it all, I've tried to capture a couple of his techniques in a 12-bar blues. **Ex. 5** opens with a hybrid rhythm approach mixing low, boogie-style bass notes with chords that *chak* on the offbeats. (Stevie often threw tasty little chordal riffs into his solos—a hallmark of Texas blues guitar.) Strive for complete isolation between the parts making the bass notes legato and the chord stabs nice and crisp, all the while keeping your right

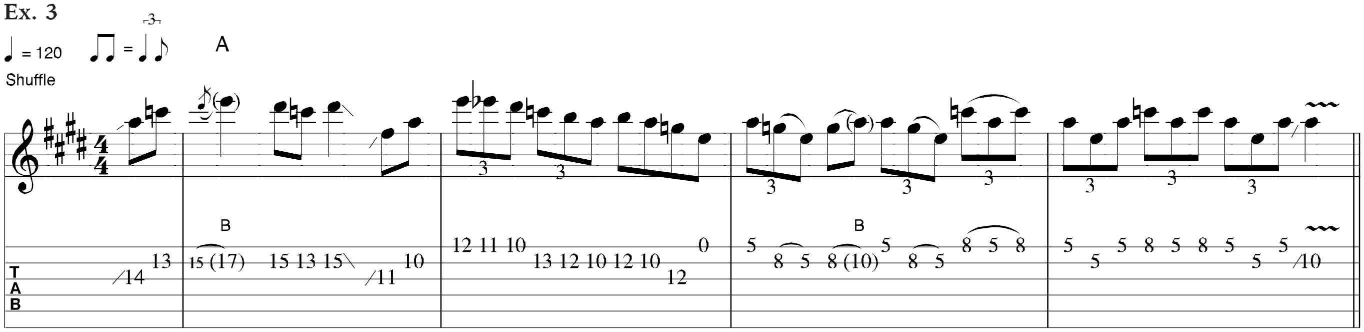
Ex. 1



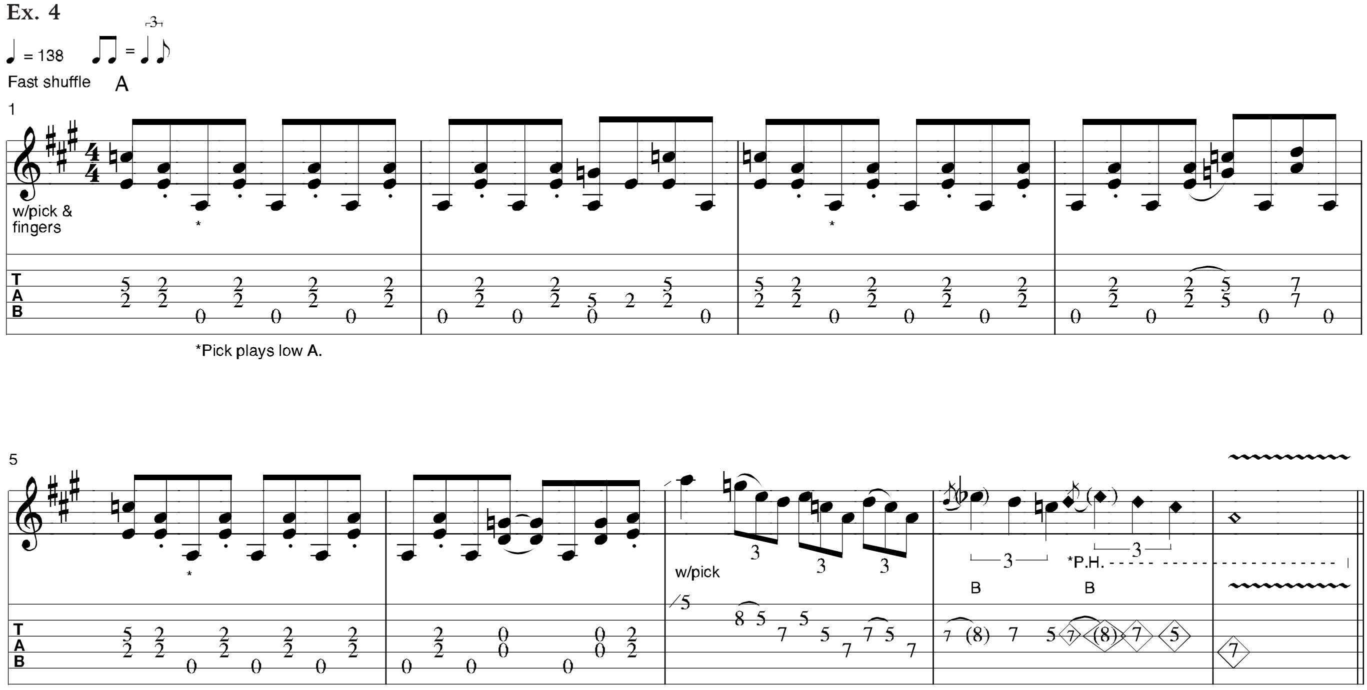
Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



*P.H. = Pinch harmonics.

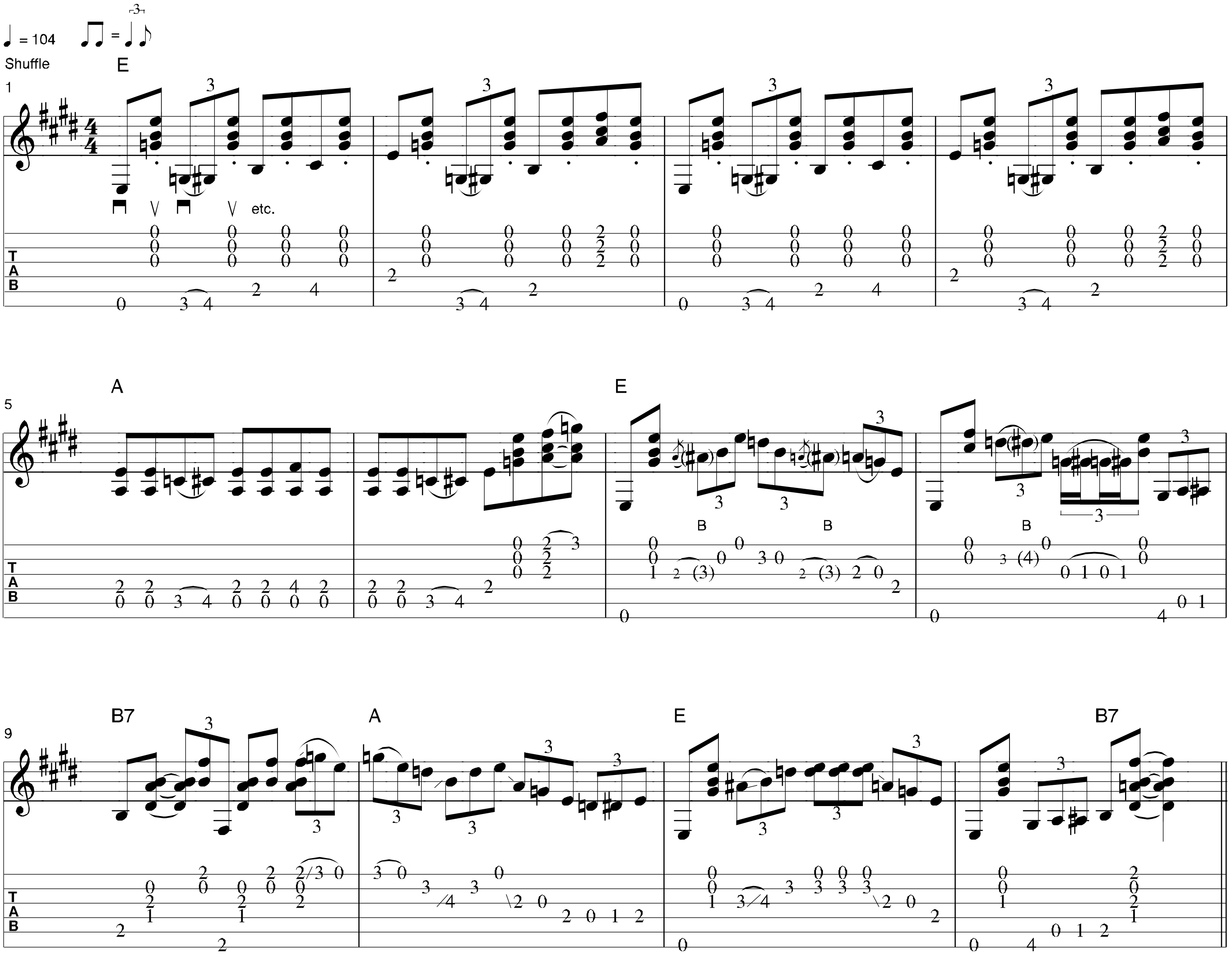
hand swingin' and free-stylin' the whole time.

The lead stuff begins in bar 7. Note that in typical Stevie style, it's a mix of chordal material and single-note lines. Don't be intimidated by the rhythmic notation in bar 8, beat two—it's just a quick hammer/pull combination, ending with an open-string double-stop. Part of the fluidity of the playing in this exercise is the use of the open strings *D*, *G*, *B*, and *E*—all notes of the *E* minor pentatonic scale, which get incorporated with the fretted notes. The phrase in bar 10 is pure Delta, and is a common fill you'll hear in the playing of Robert Johnson. SRV makes it his own, though, in the next bar, by adding the major-second double-stops on beat 3, and the little descending line that leads to the downbeat and turnaround of the final bar.

The Legacy Continues

While the Delta and Piedmont styles represent regions whose eras are frozen in early 20th-Century history, Texas blues lives on through the efforts of natives Jimmie Vaughan and Chris Duarte and transplant David Grissom, among others. They keep the Texas flame alive through their playing, but so do all the other players who don't happen to live in the South Central U.S., yet nevertheless respect the heritage of Texas blues. Preserving a legacy means that you know enough not to mess with a good thing (though if you're the caliber of T-Bone, SRV, or Freddie King, you may *improve* upon it), and you dang sure don't mess with Texas. *—Originally published in the December 2007 issue of* Guitar Player

Ex. 5



EXCLUSIVE!

FREE SRV TONES FROM NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

Play the Songs in this Issue with Guitar Rig 3

Native Instruments is offering all *How To Play Like Stevie Ray Vaughan* readers a free demo version of Guitar Rig 3 that includes some fabulous SRV tone presets you can use to perform the songs and riffs in this issue.

In the demo, saving is disabled, and the software will close after running for 30 minutes, but a new session can be started immediately. There is no maximum number of starts for the demo, and it doesn't expire, either.

For each of the featured songs, Native Instruments has designed a dedicated preset, some of them in live and studio settings. All downloads—as well as more information on how to install the software and import the presets—can be found at native-instruments.com/srv.

The Guitar Rig 3 programs roughly fall into three different eras of SRV's setup evolution. These can be divided up as follows:

1984 Sound
Texas Flood

SRV used two Fender Vibroverbs and two Fender Super Reverbs in a serial switching. The Twang Reverb amp model in Guitar Rig is very similar to these amps, and the great amount of tweaking that's possible within the Guitar Rig software allowed the designers to faithfully recreate the sound of these classic Fender models, using the expert controls to adjust the behavior of the power supply and the tubes. For the Vibroverb sound, the tweaked Twang model was coupled with a 2x12 "tweed blue" (Alnico Blue) cab, while the Super Reverb sound was achieved using a 2x12 "tweed ceramic" (Vintage Ceramics) cab. As SRV doubled his amps mostly to achieve higher volumes, the designers actually reduced the setup for the individual songs to a combination of one of each amp for the sake of less complex patches and lower CPU consumption. Nevertheless, the full setup with four amps is provided for the truly adventurous!

1985 Sound
"Stang's Swang"

SRV stopped using the Super Reverbs—apparently because they weren't loud enough. Looking for an amp that would allow for high-volume clean sounds without distortion, he had the Dumble Steel String custom built. In Guitar Rig, the Gratifier model can emulate this amp's sound because it has a very similar output stage/power amp design, and both amps use pretty much the same 6L6 layout. Using the model's expert controls, the designers were able to tweak the model to resemble SRV's clean sound. For the breakup sounds, SRV still used his Vibroverbs, and this tone is included, as well.

1990 Sound
"Riviera Paradise"

Basically the same amp setup as 1985, but adding a Fender Vibratone cab to a Vibroverb. Guitar Rig 3's designers modeled the Vibratone using the software's Rotator module, and this additional sound can be adjusted in mix volume through a volume pedal.

Note For All Sounds

SRV used a Tube Screamer set to a clean sound to boost his guitar signal for solos, to drive the amps harder, and to force them to break up a little more. This stompbox model is available in Guitar Rig 3, and it is present in every preset with its on/off switch assigned to switch 4 on the Rig Kontrol, when present. Also, SRV used wah pedals quite often, so Guitar Rig 3's Real Wah module is available in all presets, as well, as it's assigned to the expression pedal on the Rig Kontrol. Both the Skreamer and the Real Wah are turned *off* by default. To achieve realistic tones, all presets were designed using a Fender Stratocaster with strings sized .013-.056, and tuned down to E♭. The only exception is "Stang's Swang," which was played with a Gibson jazz guitar. Just like any other amplifier, the models in Guitar Rig 3 will sound different when played with different guitars, so make sure you use a similar guitar, or simply tweak the sounds to your liking in the software.

BADASS BENDS & VICIOUS VIBRATO

Greg Koch Slams Down Some Savage Blues Moves

As told to Jude Gold

Bends and vibrato are mirrors of the soul. That's why some guitarists have this queer, quivering little vibrato that makes you think to yourself, "This person is deeply troubled and perhaps in need of counseling or hugs—not from me personally, but perhaps from a medically trained professional." Good vibrato, on the other hand, is why a guy with only a five-note vocabulary can be an absolute demon on the guitar. One thing that always makes ol' Eric Clapton such a savage beast is his vibrato. That wail he had going is why people were calling him "God." Of course, Clapton still bends with great savagery, but, needless to say, he played with a little bit more knife-to-the-throatedness back in the Cream days. He was really, as I like to say, pummeling the gristle with great vehemence.

If you want to achieve a similar vibrato yourself, the first thing to do is bust out your trusty *E* minor pentatonic scale [**Ex. 1**] and work on developing a solid 1st-finger vibrato, which can be a pain in the buttocks to get dialed in right. Clapton would really make this note [**Ex. 2**] sing, as his 1st finger sat on the string, floating first up and then down [*toward the ceiling and then toward the floor*] repeatedly to create vibrato. The tone gets extra gristly, of course, when you add a little paste—that is, overdrive—by kicking on your favorite stompbox of destruction.

Next, you need to expand into more complete phrases. Here's a classic *E* pentatonic Claptonism that ends with the first-string, 1st-finger vibrato we've been talking about [**Ex. 3**]. Try other Clapton moves, such as this one in the key of *A* [**Ex. 4**]. It's hard to get a good vibrato like Clapton's going. It takes lots of playing and lots of listening.

Another person who did 1st-finger vibrato with great verve was our friend Duane Allman. He played phrases that were sometimes similar to Clapton's in terms of note sequence but were, if less explosive, much more lyrical, like this one in *E* [**Ex. 5**]. Notice the interesting bend sequence that opens the lick: Bend into high *A*, release the bend to *Gn*, and bend up into the major 3, *G#*, picking only the first note. Also dig that little trail-off at the end, the 1st-finger slide from *E* down a whole-step to *D*. Duane couldn't help sliding, even when he didn't have a slide on his finger!

Albert King bends are always fascinating combinations of activities—especially because he played upside-down and lefty, making it a tricky task to achieve the same sting on a standard guitar. But some of his moves translate brilliantly. Here's a powerful but straightforward bending lick he might've done over a slow 12/8 blues [**Ex.6**]. Enjoy soaking in the juicy third-string, 3rd-finger bend—bend with vibrato added—that opens the lick.

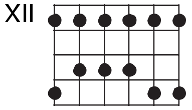
B.B. King does wilder bends than most people realize. He'll bend a string, hold the bend, and change fretted notes, as he does in this lick [**Ex. 7**], which takes place in the eighth-position *A* pentatonic box. Here, with the 3rd finger, bend *D* a whole-step up to *E*, release the bend a half-step to *E♭*, hold that bend with your 1st finger, release the 3rd finger, and now play the note the 1st finger is holding—a *Cn* bent up to *C#*. If you pick these kind of licks a lot harder, rake the strings with your pick before each note, and really grind that vibrato, you get a Billy Gibbons type of sound, like this [**Ex. 8**].

Albert Collins had a whole other approach, and one that's hard to replicate in standard tuning. One thing he did that I loved was snap a note with his thumb and then immediately snap the octave with his index finger—a move I mimic with the opening pitches of this lick [**Ex. 9**]. The high *A* is a good chance to test your 4th-finger vibrato.

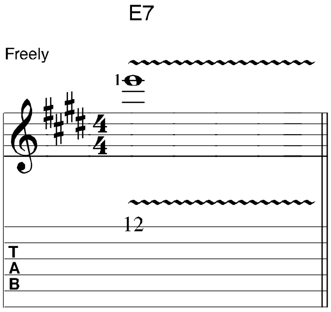
The key to developing a powerful vibrato is listening to people that have one. Slave over great recordings the way I did—with much haste and eagerness—then, record yourself and compare. At first, when you listen back to yourself, you may find yourself saying, "That's not quite right." Eventually, the more you practice with jam tracks and albums in your bedroom, you'll start saying, "Hey, you know what? This is really coming along." And, of course, practicing in live settings and recording those is also very helpful. Good vibrato and bending takes a while to develop, but it's worth it. When it comes to nuanced blues and rock guitar playing, these two things are what separate the beasts from the boys. *—Originally published in the May 2006 issue of* Guitar Player

Ex. 1

E minor pentatonic scale

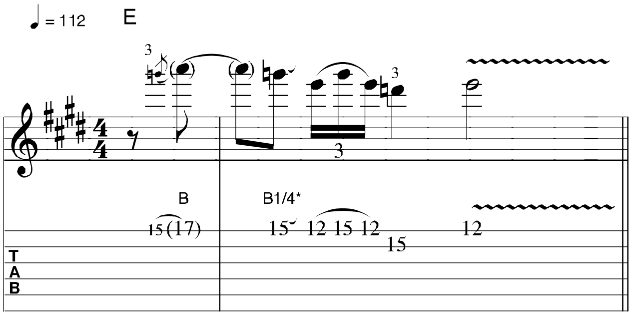


Ex. 2



Ex. 3

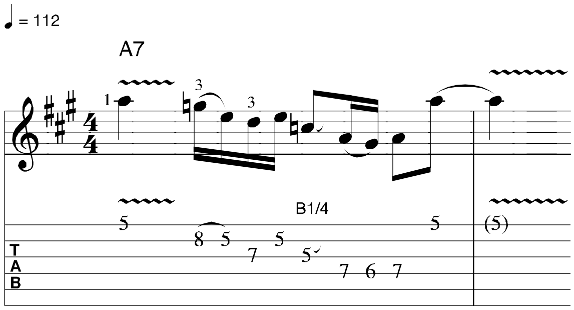
a la Eric Clapton



*B1/4 = bend note sharp one quarter-step.

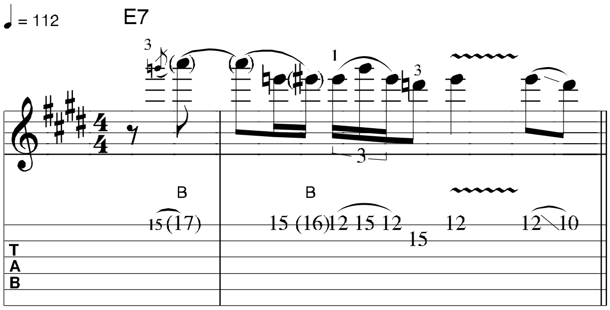
Ex. 4

a la Eric Clapton



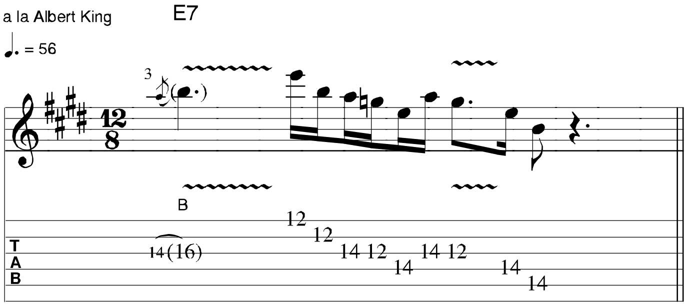
Ex. 5

a la Duane Allman



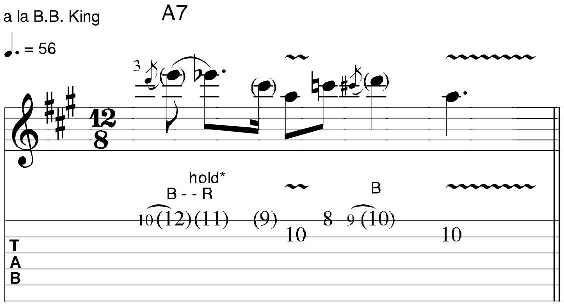
Ex. 6

a la Albert King



Ex. 7

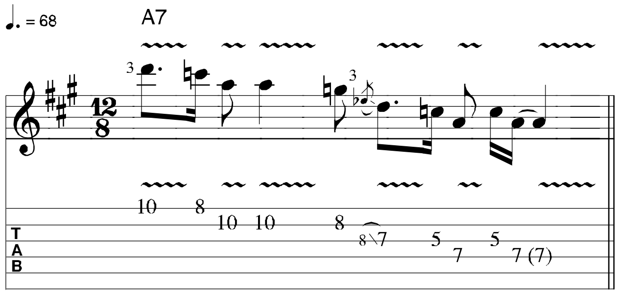
a la B.B. King



*Release bend one half-step and hold as indicated.

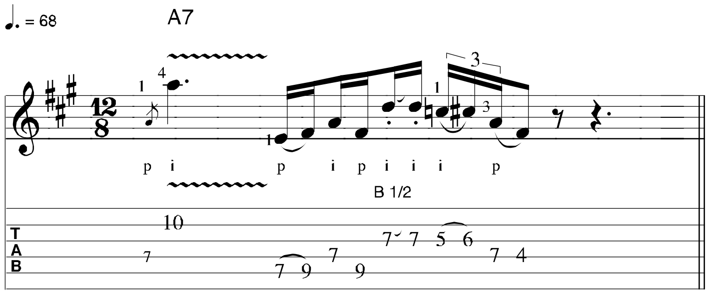
Ex. 8

a la Billy Gibbons



Ex. 9

a la Albert Collins



p = snap string w/thumb, i = snap string w/index

TEXAS LIGHTNING!

How To Play Blues Like Johnny Winter

By Jesse Gress

Let's set the record straight. In the wake of Stevie Ray Vaughan's meteoric rise to fame and subsequent legacy, there may exist generations who have either forgotten or never knew that another Texas guitarist had already been there and done that more than a dozen years earlier. Fueled by word of mouth and generous hype from *Rolling Stone* (yep, they really used to be that influential), John Dawson Winter III's first pilgrimage from his native Beaumont to New York City in 1968 (at the behest of Scene manager Steve Paul) sparked a vicious bidding war between record companies, and Columbia Records reportedly paid the Texas guitar slinger the biggest advance ever bestowed upon a new artist. Winter delivered big time, and the label's gamble paid off. The Texas Tornado's blend of charged-up urban Chicago sounds and traditional Delta styles had a tremendous impact on blues and rock communities alike, and Winter skyrocketed to stardom virtually overnight.

Some confusion arose as several earlier Texas recordings surfaced before Columbia could release Winter's much-anticipated official debut, *Johnny Winter*, but fortunately one of them—*The Progressive Blues Experiment* (a killer "live" album recorded in a cavernous empty club)—turned out to be the best advance publicity Columbia could ever hope for. This first taste of Winter's music was as startling as his albino visage.

And that voice! Believe me folks, this was life-changing stuff. The day *TPBE* came out, I talked my cousin into buying both it and a copy of R. Crumb's *Head Comix* to peruse while Winter blew our 12-year-old minds. It was the perfect combination. And, apparently, we weren't alone. By the time *Johnny Winter* was released in 1969, Winter had a ravenous audience in waiting. The record's winning combination of blues standards and originals showcased Winter's diversity in both electric and acoustic settings, and established him as a major artist. His follow-up, *Second Winter*—three vinyl sides of revolutionary blues (yes, side four was blank) psyched-up with wah-wah, electric mandolin, and plenty of Hendrix-inspired studio effects—also remains a perennial favorite.

When Winter unveiled his new rock and roll band of ex-McCoys on *Johnny Winter And* in the summer of 1970, co-guitarist Rick Derringer proved to be a more than capable sparring partner, and the pair's amazing in-concert guitar duels (documented on *Johnny Winter And Live*) were unprecedented. Following the demise of the "And" band, Winter disappeared from the public eye during 1972 (spending much of that year recovering from heroin addiction). In 1973, he formed a new trio, released the successful comeback album *Still Alive and Well*, and mounted a triumphant arena tour. Winter would follow this path for the next several years before abandoning the rock scene for a pure blues lifestyle in 1977. Since then, Winter produced and played on three albums by his mentor Muddy Waters, who lovingly referred to Winter as his son, and has continued to record and tour through the present, garnering Grammy awards and overcoming several major health issues along the way.

Winter is now an elder statesman of the blues, a title he doesn't relish. "I don't like it that I'm getting this old. I'd rather be a student than a teacher," he once told me—and that was 13 years ago! But the legendary guitarist is by all means alive and well, and the Winter of 2007 has been a productive one. Let's hunker down and find out where it all began. First, you gotta ...

Get Struck by Lightnin'

After brief stints on clarinet and ukulele, Johnny Winter took up guitar at age 11, cutting his musical teeth by imitating early rock and roll records by Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, etc. Before long, he became smitten with the post-war Chicago blues of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, Sonny Boy Williamson, B.B. King et al, and the stylings of pre-war Mississippi Delta bluesmen such as Lightnin' Hopkins, Robert Johnson, Son House, Leadbelly, and Blind Lemon Jefferson. It was all of these elements coupled with the ensuing late-'60s British blues boom that shaped Winter's unique approach to the blues.

"I mixed all that stuff up," he later recalled. "I would learn how to play a record note-for-note. After I got the feel of what was going on, I just took what I heard and assimilated it, and it would come out part mine and part everybody else's." While still in Beaumont, Winter also became proficient in the fingerstylings of Merle Travis and Chet Atkins, learning how to play "Yankee Doodle" and "Dixie" at the same time, a traditional southern rite of passage. And though their early musical preferences were polar opposites, it's safe to say that Johnny's younger sibling Edgar—a musical genius in his own right—certainly had a big impact on his big bro'.

Fire Up Your 'Bird

Though he has been indelibly associated with

Gibson Firebirds from 1970 to the present, Winter has been through a stable of guitars over the decades, becoming quite attached to several along the way. These include a Gibson ES-125, a white Fender Stratocaster, a white Gibson Les Paul/SG Custom, a 1966 Fender Mustang, a Fender XII strung with six strings, a twin-pickup Epiphone solidbody, a Gibson Les Paul goldtop with P-90s, as well as his beloved trio of '60s Firebirds (two sunburst and one white), all of which Winter played with a plastic Gibson thumbpick. He also developed a singular voice as an acoustic slide player, particularly on National resonator guitars, as heard on "Dallas" (*Johnny Winter*).

In the early '90s, Winter began a lengthy stint on headless Erlewine Lazer guitars, typically playing them through a chorus pedal in standard tuning dropped one whole-step (*D, G, C, F, A, D*, low to high) but has returned to his beloved 'Birds for many of his most recent appearances. Winter's stinging tone—which he attributes to "everything on all the way, and all treble and no bass"—has cranked out of Fender Bassmans, Twin Reverbs, and Super Reverbs, as well as various combinations of Marshalls and Ampegs. Since the late '70s, however, Winter has played almost exclusively through Music Man HD410 amps. (Tip: The middle position of those EQ rocker switches on Ampeg V-4 heads or VT-22 combos is the gateway to Winter's distinctive early-'70s arena tone.)

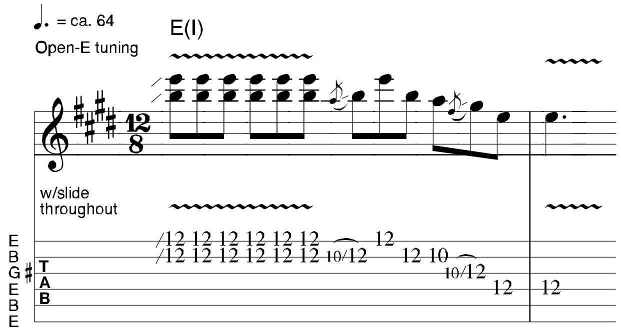
Soak in Muddy Waters

Winter was heavily influenced by the early Chess recordings of Muddy Waters he had collected. When I met with him to discuss Waters' style for a feature in the March '94 *GP*, he provided a scholarly dissection of many of Waters' key intros and solo phrases before joining his trio and launching into a private concert that demonstrated many of the same licks in action. Our first three examples show some of the first open-*E* slide runs that Winter siphoned from Waters. Don a thumbpick and metal slide à la Winter (on your 4th finger) and maintain a steady 12th-fret vibrato during the first half of **Ex. 1a**, then shuttle between the 10th and 12th frets for the closing lick on beats three and four. **Ex. 1b** begins sans slide with a spooky minor-third trill followed by a typical Waters slide bass run. You can start **Ex. 1c** on any octave *E* as long as you nail the trademark first-string Waters moves on the next three beats. [*Tip: Keep those approach slides short—whole-steps, half-steps, or anywhere in between*.] The final run in bar 2 transforms the lick into a bona fide turnaround. **Ex. 1d** shifts to open-*A* tuning (*E, A, E, A, C#, E*, low to high) for another signature Waters riff, this one navigating the V and IV chords in bars 9-11 of a standard 12-bar blues.

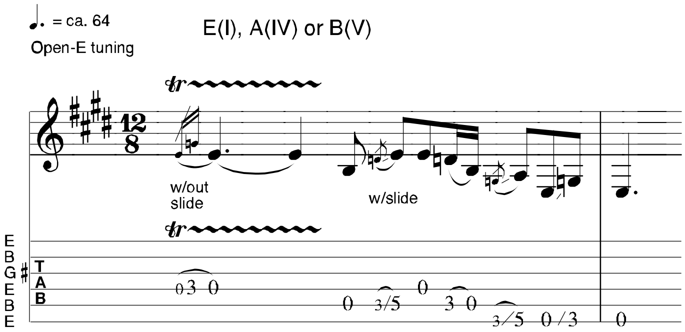
Cook Up Some Signature Moves

The recurring standard-tuned motif in our next pair of examples can be traced back to the ensemble horn-section riff from T-Bone Walker's "Everytime," but I'll always think of it as a Johnny Winter lick. Barre your index finger across the first and second strings at the 3rd fret, hammer the 4 to

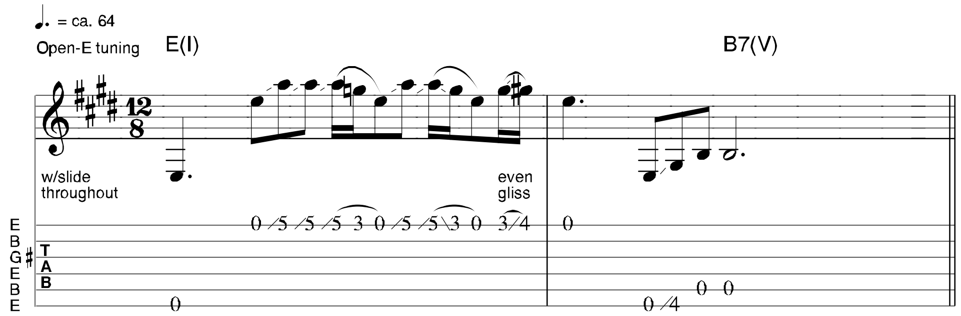
Ex. 1a



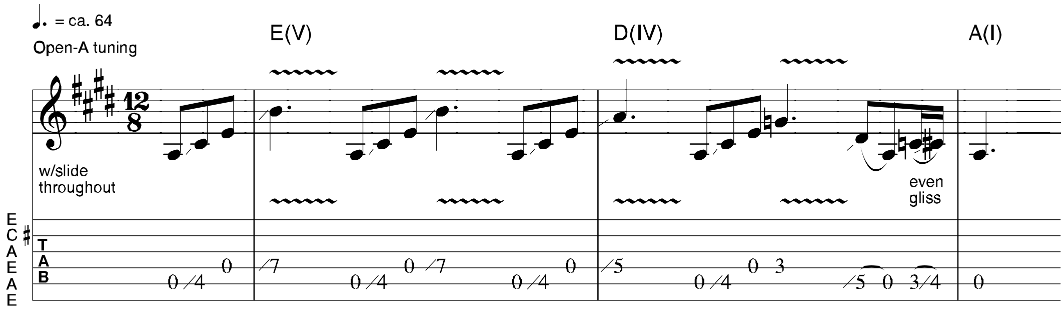
Ex. 1b



Ex. 1c



Ex. 1d

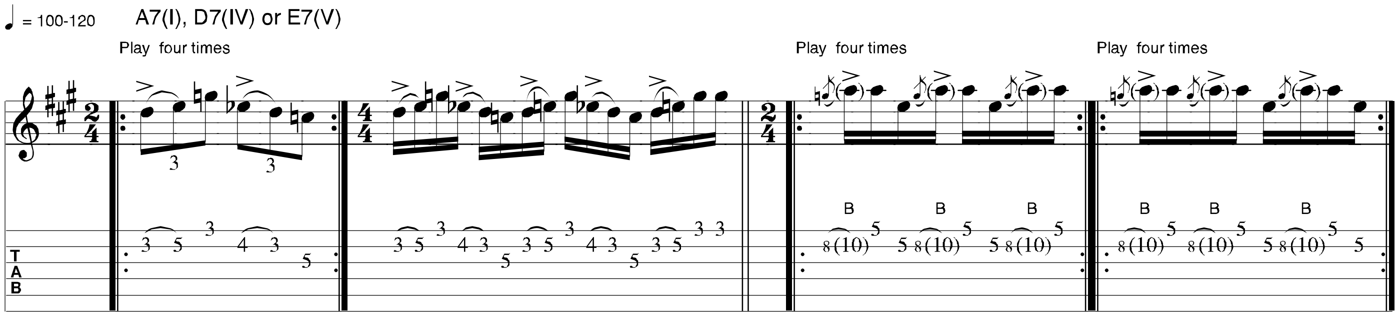


the 5 (*D* to *E*) on the first two eighth-notes in beat one, follow up with a high *A* upstroke, then pull off from the *b*5 to the 4 (*Eb* to *D*) in beat two, add the *b*3 (*C*), and you'll be sailing through the repetitive triplets in **Ex. 2a** in no time. **Ex. 2b** recasts the same motif in a sixteenth-note setting. The "name game" (you know—"Johnny-Johnny-bo-bonnie, etc.") lick in Ex. 2d is the same as starting **Ex. 2c** on beat four.

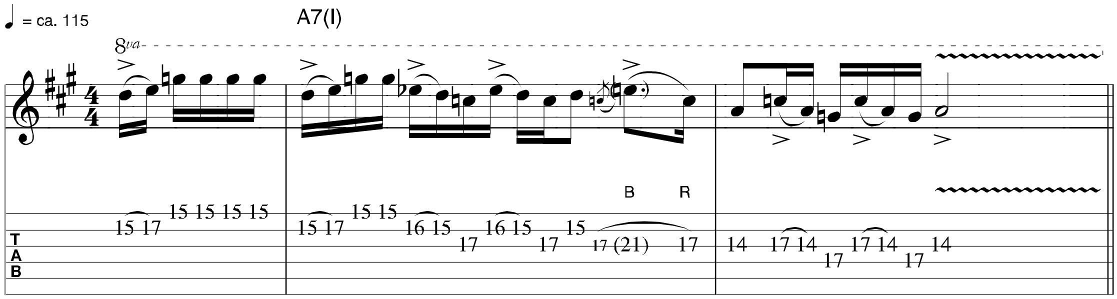
Smother 'Em in Gravy, Texas-Style

Let's look at how Johnny incorporates short licks into longer lines. You should recognize the pickup and opening lick in **Ex. 3a** as an extrapolation from Examples 2a and 2b, but new here are the major third bend (yow!) on beat four of bar 1, and the mini 3/16 hemiola (three-against-four phrasing) in bars 1 and 2. After you nail **Ex. 3b**'s slinky fifth-position *A* blues/Dorian lines laced with Winter's one-of-a-kind vibrato, try subbing

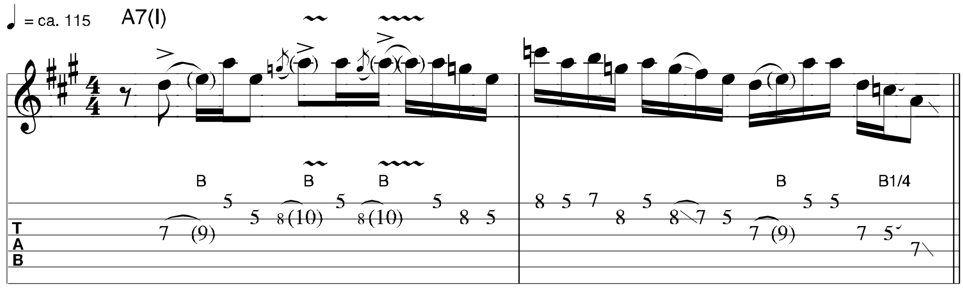
Ex. 2a, b, c, d



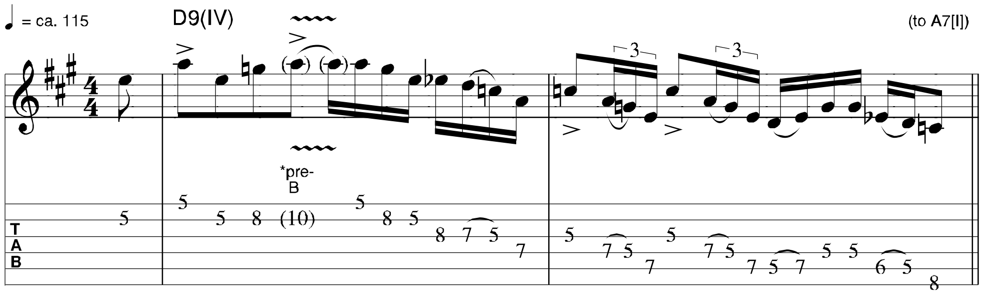
Ex. 3a



Ex. 3b

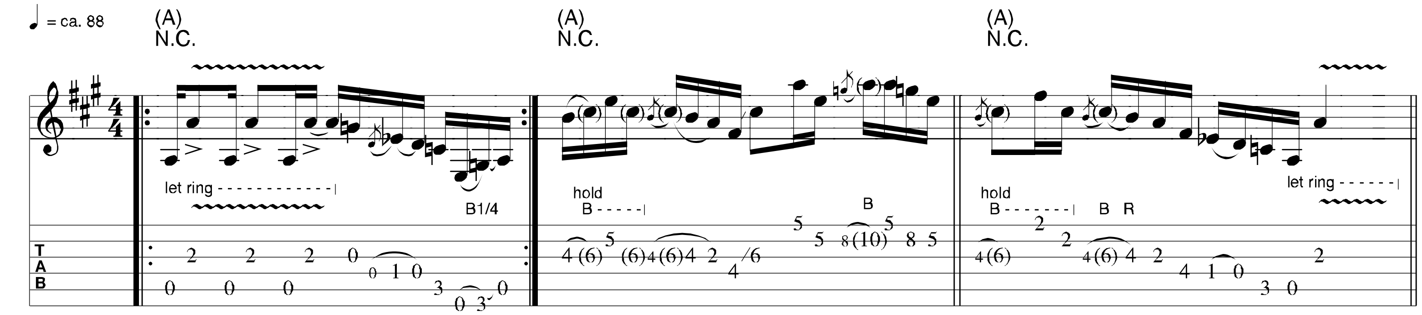


Ex. 3c

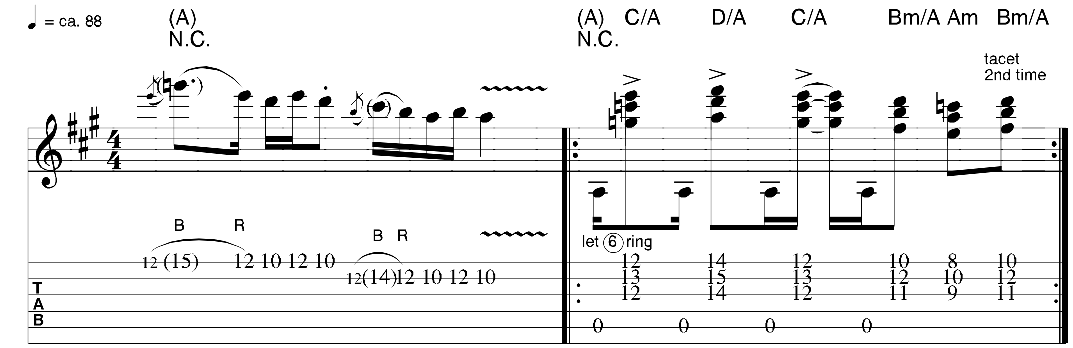


*Pre-bend from 8th fret.

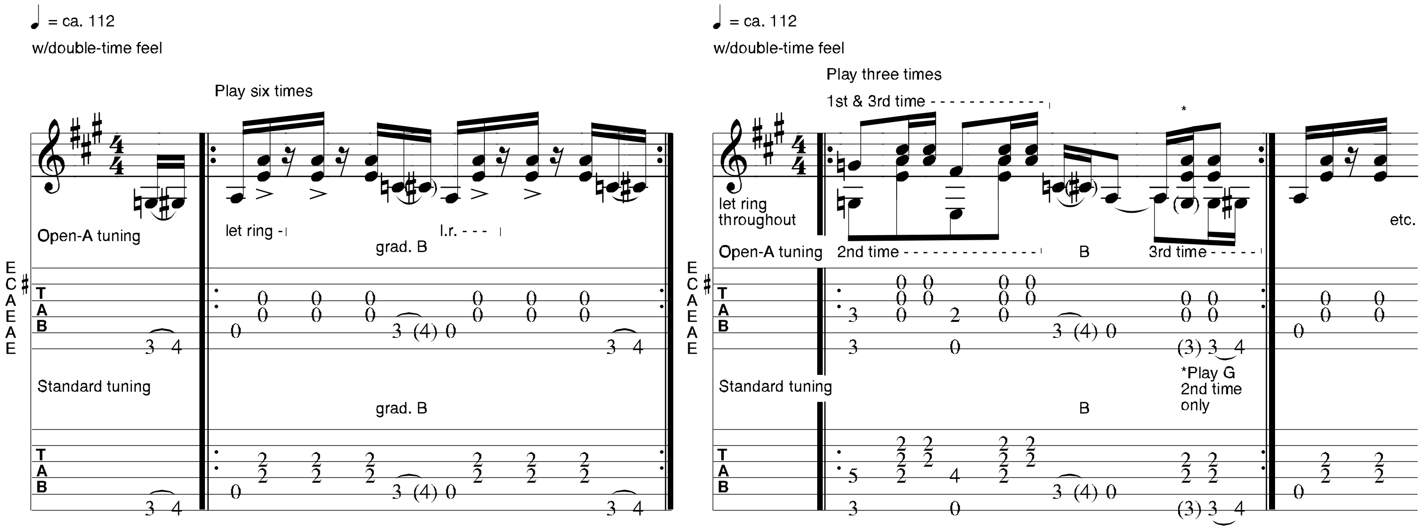
Ex. 4a, b, c



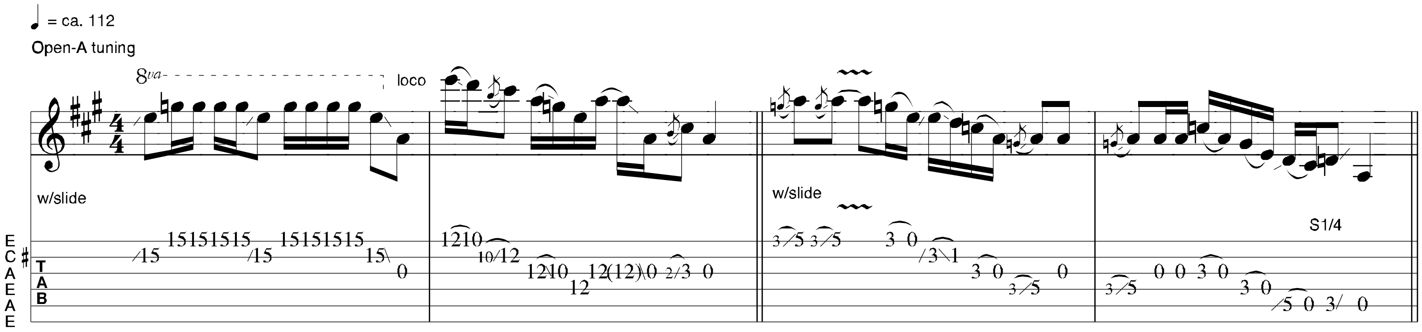
Ex. 4d, e



Ex. 5a, b



Ex. 5c, d



Continues on page 94

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by **David-Lucas Burge**

It all started in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry ...

I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet somehow she always shined as the star performer at our school. It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire.

"*You* could never be as good as *Linda*," she would taunt. "*Linda's* got *Perfect Pitch*."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name *exact notes and chords*—all BY EAR; how she could sing any tone—*from memory alone*; how she could play songs—after just *hearing* them; the list went on and on ...

My heart sank. *Her EAR is the secret to her success* I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But it bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch? How could she know notes and chords just by *hearing* them? It seemed impossible.

Finally I couldn't stand it anymore. So one day I marched right up to Linda and asked her point-blank if she had Perfect Pitch.

"Yes," she nodded aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "*Can I test you sometime?*"

"OK," she replied.

Now she would eat her words ...

My plot was ingeniously simple ...

When Linda least suspected, I walked right up and challenged her to name tones for me—*by ear.*

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I set up everything perfectly so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll *never* guess F♯, I thought.)

I had barely touched the key.

"F♯," she said. I was astonished.

I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was AMAZING.

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—and she was right on!

Now I started to boil.

I called out more tones, trying hard to make them increasingly difficult. But each note she sang perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "*How in the world do you do it?*" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And that was all I could get out of her!

"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled. (age 14, 9th grade)

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me like a ton of bricks. I was dizzy with disbelief. Yet from then on, I knew that Perfect Pitch was real.

I couldn't figure it out ...

"*How does she DO it?*" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* recognize and sing tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me. People call themselves *musicians*, yet they can't tell a C from a C♯? Or A major from F major?! That's as strange as a portrait painter who can't name the colors of paint on his palette. It all seemed so odd and contradictory.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it out for myself. With a little sweet-talking, I got my three brothers and two sisters to play piano tones for me—so I could try to name them by ear. But it always turned into a messy guessing game I just couldn't win.

Day after day I tried to learn those freaking tones. I would hammer a note *over* and *over* to make it stick in my head. But hours later I would remember it a half step flat. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't recognize or remember any of the tones by ear. They all sounded the same after awhile; how were you supposed to know which was which—just by *listening?*

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda. But now I realized it was way beyond my reach. So after weeks of work, I finally gave up.

Then it happened ...

It was like a miracle ... a twist of fate ... like finding the lost Holy Grail ...

Once I stopped *straining* my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the simple secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

Curiously, I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of

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sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go"—and *listened*—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon—to my own disbelief—*I too could name the tones by ear!* It was simple. I could hear how F♯ sounds one way, while B♭ has a *totally different sound*—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that *anyone* could unlock their own Perfect Pitch with this simple secret of "Color Hearing."

Bursting with excitement, I told my best friend, Ann (a flutist).

She *laughed* at me. "You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted. "You can't *develop* it."

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I countered. I sat her down and showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. With this jump start, Ann soon realized she also had gained Perfect Pitch.

We became instant celebrities. Classmates loved to call out tones for us to magically sing from thin air. They played chords for us to name by ear. They quizzed us on what key a song was in.

Everyone was fascinated with our "supernatural" powers, yet to Ann and me, it was just normal.

Way back then, I never dreamed I would later cause such a stir in the academic world. But when I entered college and started to explain my discoveries, professors *laughed* at me.

"You must be *born* with Perfect Pitch," they'd say. "You can't *develop* it!"

I would listen politely. Then I'd reveal the simple secret—*so they could hear it for themselves*.

You'd be surprised how fast they changed their tune!

In college, my so-called "perfect ear" allowed me to skip over two required music theory courses. Perfect Pitch made everything easier—my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, and even sight-read (because—without looking at the keyboard—you know you're playing the correct tones).

And because my ears were open, music sounded richer. I learned that music is truly a HEARING art.

Oh, you must be wondering: whatever happened with Linda? Excuse me, I'll have to backtrack . . .

It was now my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In these three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. And I had. But my youthful ambition wasn't satisfied. I needed one more thing: *to beat Linda.* Now was my *final chance*.

The University of Delaware hosts a performing music festival each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me that year as the *grand finale*.

The fated day arrived. Linda gave her usual sterling performance. She would be tough to match, let alone surpass. But my turn finally came, and I went for it.

Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out with selections from Beethoven, Chopin, and Ravel. The applause was overwhelming.

Afterwards, I scoured the bulletin board for our grades. Linda received an A. This was no surprise.

Then I saw that I had scored an A+.

Sweet victory was music to my ears, mine at last! —D.L.B.

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Join musicians around the world who have already discovered the **secrets** to **Perfect Pitch.**

For 27 years, we've received letters from musicians in 120 countries:

● "Wow! It really worked. I feel like a new musician. I am very proud I could achieve something of this caliber." *J.M., percussion* ● "Someone played a D major chord and I recognized it straight away. *S.C., bass* ● "Thanks...I developed a full Perfect Pitch in just two weeks! It just happened like a miracle." *B.B., guitar/piano* ● "It is wonderful. I can truly hear the differences in the color of the tones." *D.P., student* ● "I heard the differences on the initial playing, which did in fact surprise me. It is a breakthrough." *J.H., student* ● "It's so simple it's ridiculous. *M.P., guitar* ● "I'm able to play things I hear in my head. Before, I could barely do it." *J.W., keyboards* ● "I hear a song on the radio and I know what they're doing. My improvisations have improved. I feel more in control." *I.B., bass guitar* ● "It feels like I'm singing and playing MY notes instead of somebody else's—like music is more 'my own.' *L.H., voice/guitar* ● "What a boost for children's musical education! *R.P., music teacher* ● "I can identify tones and keys just by hearing them and sing tones at will. When I hear music now it has much more definition, form and substance. I don't just passively listen anymore, but actively listen to detail." *M.U., bass* ● "Although I was skeptical at first, I am now awed." *R.H., sax* ● "It's like hearing in a whole new dimension." *L.S., guitar* ● "I started crying and laughing all at the same time. *J.S., music educator* ● "I wish I could have had this 30 years ago!" *R.B., voice* ● "This is absolutely what I had been searching for." *D.F., piano* ● "Mr. Burge—you've changed my life!" *T.B., student* ● "Learn it or be left behind." *P.S., student . . .*

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For 27 years now, musicians around the globe have proven the simple methods that David-Lucas Burge stumbled upon as a teenager *(plus research at two leading universities—see www.PerfectPitch.com/research)*.

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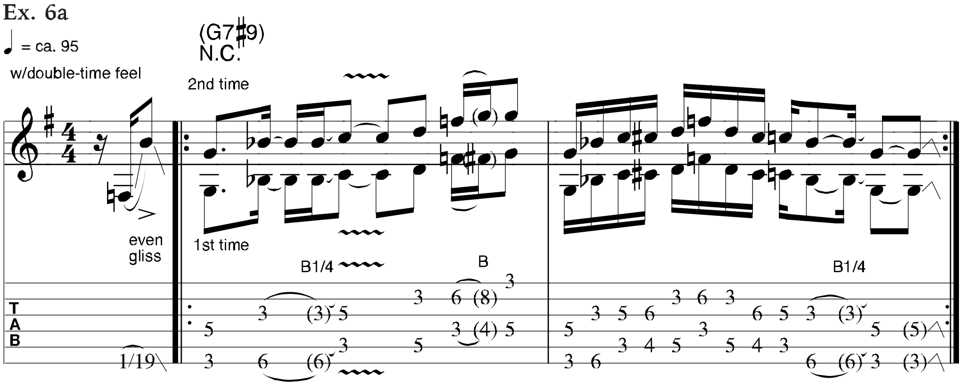
Continued from page 91

Ex. 2c or Ex. 2d for the first two beats in bar 1. **Ex. 3c** features a signature vibratoed pre-bend, a cool descending A blues scale run, and a pair of Winter's trademark triplet pull-offs.

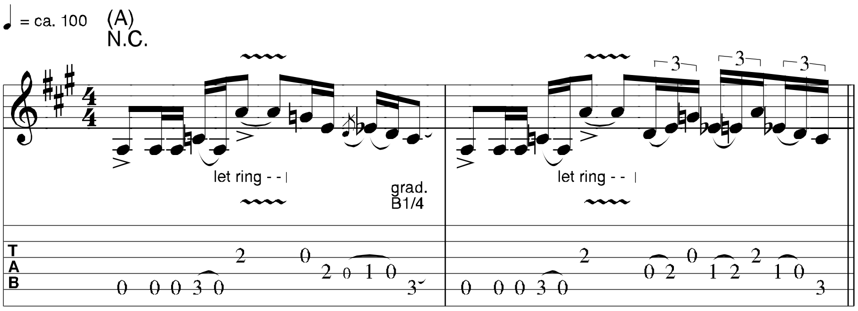
Get Stoned

Winter covered several Jagger/Richards compositions over the course of his career, including "Let It Bleed" and "Stray Cat Blues," as well as Richards' "Silver Train," but it was the "And" band's version of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (from *Johnny Winter And Live*) thaat transformed the song's original guitar figure into one of the top ten bar-band riffs of all time. The band utilized the song's *B-E-D-A/C#* interlude and crafted a new four-bar power-chord outro similar to **Ex. 7a** to frame their extended guitar solos. The repetitive one-bar snippets in the next three examples will work equally well over either progression. High points include Winter's vibratoed pre-bends in **Ex. 7b**, the country-informed *B* pentatonic bends, hammer-ons and pull-offs in **Ex. 7c**, and a Clapton-style motif played without pull-offs in **Ex. 7d**. *—Originally published in the January 2008 issue of* Guitar Player

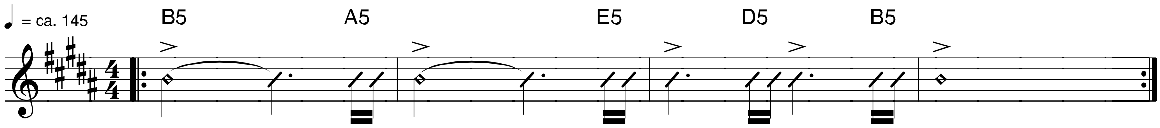
Ex. 6a



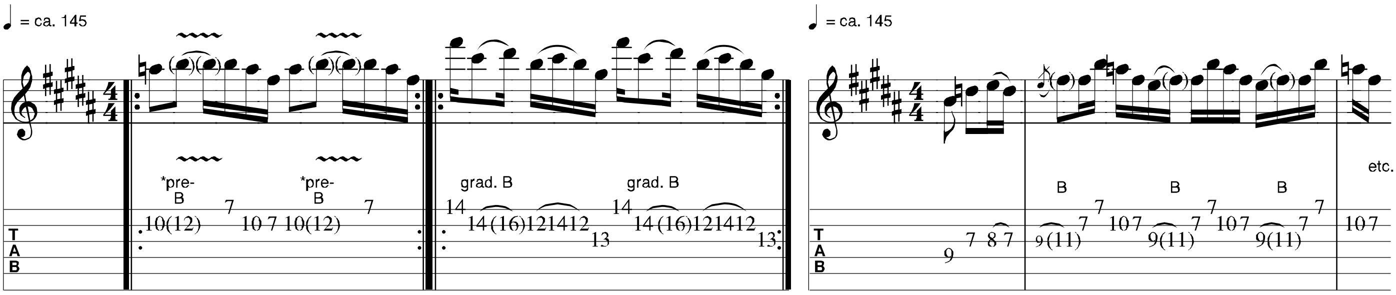
Ex. 6b



Ex. 7a



Ex. 7b, c, d



*Pre-bend from 10th fret.

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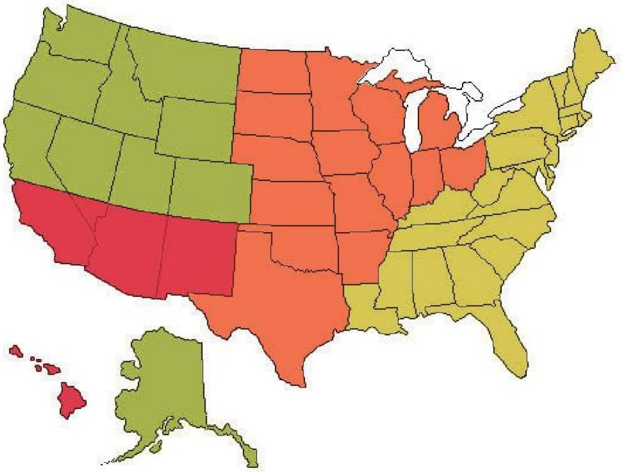

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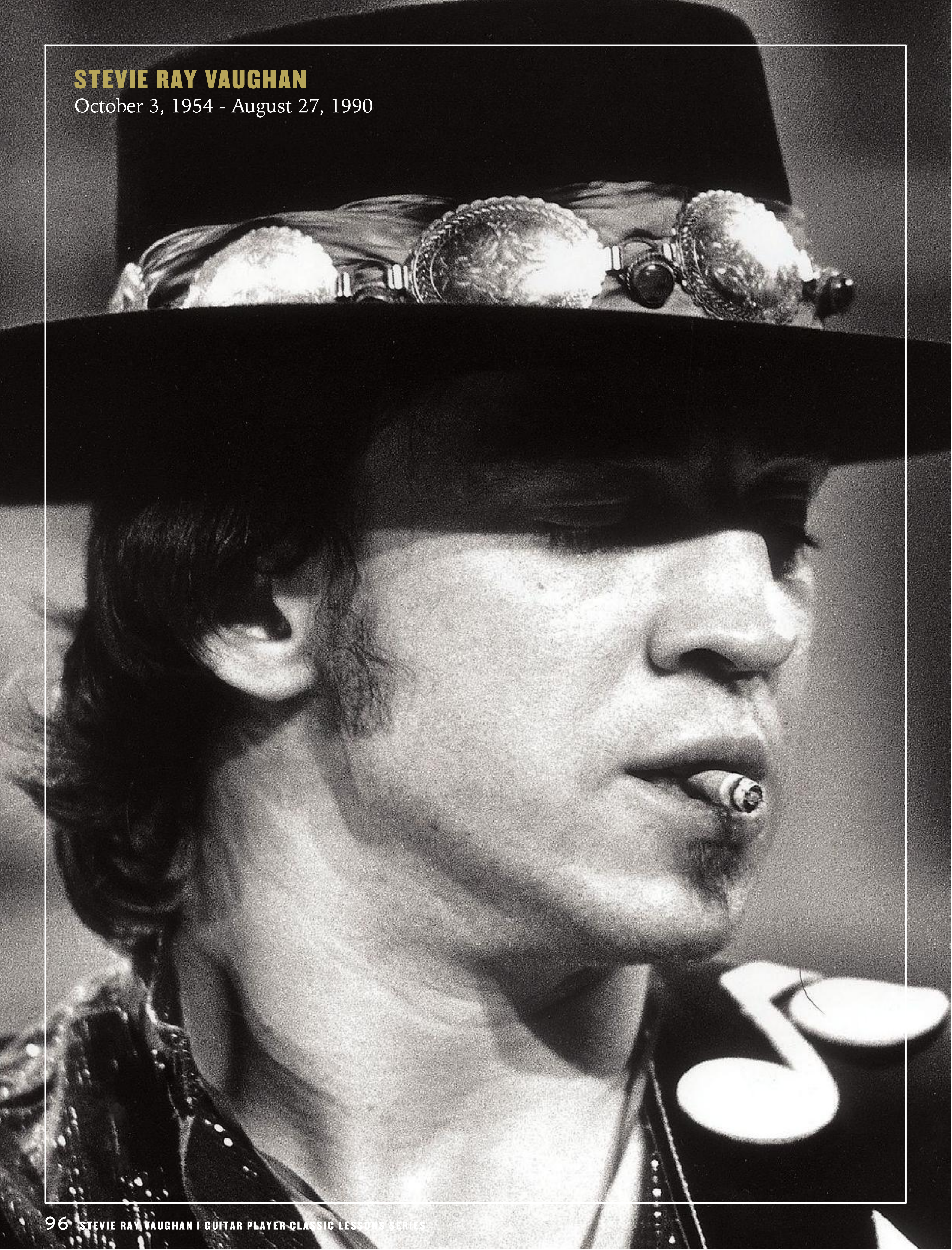

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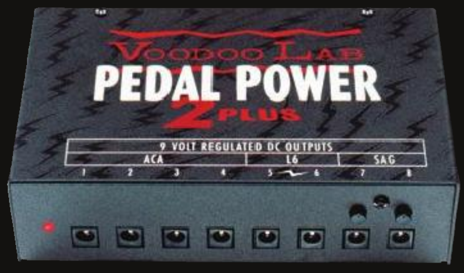

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